



GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT



Partial view of the location of the General Conference Session

January-March 1996

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Reformation Herald

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

Editor: A. C. Sas
Associate Editor: B. Monteiro

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The Beauty of Holiness

by Eliza H. Morton

*What makes the beauty of the cloud,
The beauty of the rose?
What makes the heavens awe the mind
With their deep, calm repose?
It is the unity that's there
The order of our God.
All nature is a system grand—
The beauty of the Lord.*

*The beauty of His holiness
He would behold in us,
In word, in deed, in kindly tone,
In all that's generous—
A well-developed character
As white as snowy dove,
And shedding forth a steady light
Made wonderful by love.*

*The beauty of His holiness
Upon His church should rest,
And orderly His worship be
In Christ made manifest.
Most beautiful that union is
In God's own house of prayer,
For then the angels from the heights
Delight to linger there.*

*The beauty of His holiness
Through flesh at length shall shine.
Immortal in its loveliness
May be this flesh of mine.
The Spirit of the living God
In every pulsing vein
May lift my body from this earth
To heaven's own lofty plain.*

*The beauty of His holiness
Will make the desert bloom;
'Twill rest on every barren place,
And drive away earth's gloom;
'Twill draw deific glory down
Till heaven and earth are one,
And in them both forevermore
God's will be fully done.*

EDITORIAL

NO TURNING TO THE RIGHT OR LEFT

“In order to walk in the narrow way the believing one must follow the leader, turning not to the right hand or to the left.”¹

“And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.” Deuteronomy 28:14.

“Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” Proverbs 4:27.

Danger of turning to the left

There is a danger of departing from the simplicity of the gospel, and falling into a condition of carelessness and indifference. The word of God warns us:

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” Hebrews 3:12.

“Brethren and sisters, I appeal to you as Seventh-day Adventists to be all that this name signifies. There is danger of departing from the spirit of the message.”²

“The Israel of God in these last days are in constant danger of mingling with the world and losing all signs of being the chosen people of God.”³

“There is danger in departing in the least degree from the Lord’s instruction. When we deviate from the plain path of duty, a train of circumstances will arise that seems irresistibly to draw us farther and farther from the right.”⁴

Turning to the right

On the one hand there is danger in apostasy from the truth, and on the other hand there is also a danger of turning to the other side, to fanaticism and extremism. Lukewarmness, apostasy, and fanaticism are equally dangerous. Satan is not happy when we go straight forward on the way that leads to heaven. He wants us to turn either to one way or the other.

“As the end draws near, the enemy will work with all his power to bring in fanaticism among us. He would rejoice to see Seventh-day Adventists going to such extremes that they would be branded by the world as a body of fanatics. Against this danger I am bidden to warn ministers and lay members. Our work is to teach men and women to build on a true foundation, to plant their feet on a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”⁵

“As the natural eyesight of persons becomes so impaired as to be almost useless, so in the case of religious fanaticism and extremists, the eye of the soul through which good and evil may be discerned, becomes so perverted that nothing is distinguished clearly. A healthful discernment is ruined, so the spirit of truth and righteousness cannot be distinguished from the spirit of error and fanaticism.”⁶

“Again I was shown that the cause of God was suffering, souls were in danger, and Satan was triumphing, that the truth of God was covered with reproach by men who professed to love the truth. Some men and women had acted out their natural temperament, were harsh and denunciatory, overbearing, and self-confident. They had by their inconsistent, fanatical course caused unbelievers to hate them, and those who bore the Advent name were brought into disrepute.”⁷


“I was shown the danger that will threaten the church, because here and there persons will be rising up, proclaiming that they have new light... Reason and common sense are laid aside, and they become fanatical. Religious fanatics will certainly appear among us, and they will cause much care and much grief to those who have the honor of the cause of God at heart. They will not consider it their duty to counsel with their brethren.”⁸

“There is a class of people who

are always ready to go off on some tangent, who want to catch up something strange and wonderful and new; but God desires us all to move calmly, considerately, choosing our words in harmony with the solid truth for this time. The truth should be presented to the mind as free as possible from that which is emotional, while still bearing the intensity and solemnity befitting its character. We must guard against encouraging extremists, those who would be either in the fire or in the water.”⁹

Here is a timely counsel from the pen of inspiration about placing all emphasis on one specific point of doctrine as the most important point of the message. The servant of the Lord warns us also against the so-called “new light”:

“That which Brother ____ calls light is apparently harmless; it does not look as though anyone could be injured by it. But, brethren, it is Satan’s device, his entering wedge. This has been tried again and again. One accepts some new and original idea which does not seem to conflict with the truth. He talks of it and dwells upon it until it seems to him to be clothed with beauty and importance, for Satan has power to give this false appearance. At last it becomes the all-absorbing theme, the one great point around which everything centers; and the truth is uprooted from the heart. . . . Brethren, as an ambassador of Christ I warn you to beware of these side issues, whose tendency is to divert the mind from the truth. Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension.”¹⁰

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Isaiah 30:21. 

1 *Signs of the Times*, July 18, 1892.

2 *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 367.

3 *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 283.

4 *Signs of the Times*, March 24, 1887.

5 *Gospel Workers*, p. 316.

6 *Evangelism*, pp. 610, 611.

7 *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, pp. 231, 232.

8 *General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1896.

9 *Evangelism*, p. 611.

10 *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 292.

Threescore Years and Ten

By N.S. Brittain

The psalmist wrote: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." This apparently mournful comment yet concedes the truth of man's condition. Our years pass when we are young, with little thought that there will come an end.

When we are children, the passage of time seems so slow. We eagerly look forward to each birthday and feel so "grown-up" with the successive years, until eventually we begin to wish that they would go just a little slower and we fain would forget our birthdays.

The passage of time has always been of interest to man, for mankind can only count years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. Only God knows the meaning of time without end. We like to remember birthdays, anniversaries because it is good to remember. And our heavenly Father likes us to remember. This is so important that the word remember appears 148 times in the Bible.

Some things we should always remember, as the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8). The children of Israel were told that they should remember that they had been bondmen in Egypt (Deut. 15:15). as they were never to forget how God had delivered them and cared for them all the years. Unfortunately, we often forget—or remember—the wrong things. On the way to Canaan, the children of Israel could remember only too well the fish, onions and garlic of Egypt. This is a strange phenomenon, remembering the wrong things and forgetting the right things. It is usually easier to remember good things and forget the bad and sad (John 16:21), but often

our perverse nature places things in the reverse order.

In one of the shorter verses in the Bible, Jesus said that there was one thing we should not forget. "Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:30. The purpose of this injunction was that we should remember the results of disobedience. Lot and his family had been told that they should not look back to Sodom, they were to hurry away; but Lot's wife did turn her eyes back to Sodom. Perhaps she was thinking of her children still there, or perhaps some treasured item in her house. We don't know—nor do we even know her name—but we do know that she suffered the penalty for disobeying a direct command.

Daniel remembers

Centuries later, a respected old man does some remembering. He has been a captive in another country for seventy years. During that time he and his friends have been tested in many ways to see if they would be faithful to God's commands. God's directions for their daily living had been faithfully honored. At the risk of their life, suffering a terrible penalty by fire, they had remained true to God—and God had honored them. The Son of God had appeared with them in the flames and they were then removed with no harm at all. But why were they captives in a strange country without power to live their lives according to their conscience?

Many years previously the prophet Jeremiah at the command of God had warned His people that if they would continue to worship idols instead of Him, the Creator, He would permit them to become captives to an idolatrous nation and then they would see from actuality the results of idolatry.

The people took little notice. "The prophet Jeremiah continues his prophesying to that people, even saying, after all these words of warning and reproof, that if they would turn to the Lord, and especially if they would regard His law and keep His Sabbath, Jerusalem would stand forever; but they refused the words of the prophet, they persisted in building themselves up in their own pride, and so the Lord through Jeremiah named Nebuchadnezzar as the one who would come against them, destroy their city, and take them into captivity to serve the king of Babylon for seventy years." (Statement by W. W. Prescott after the burning of the Review and Herald office. —*Review and Herald*, May 19, 1903.)

There are four things stated by Prescott that contributed to the captivity of Israel:

1. Turning away from the Lord.
2. Disregarding the law of God, especially the Sabbath.
3. Refusal to listen to the words of the prophet.
4. Building themselves up in their own pride.

And so they suffered seventy years of captivity to an idolatrous nation. The Babylonians worshipped Baal, the god of the Canaanites, under the name of Bel. Just as the father of Jezebel the wife of Ahab was named Eth-Baal as a high priest of Baal, so the last king of Babylon was named Belshazzar, meaning Bel protect the king. Daniel had also been given another name, Belteshazzar, though it is not clear that this name refers to the idol Bel. Regardless, Daniel by faithfulness, even as a captive, rose to become the prime minister of Babylon, directly responsible to the king. At this time when the seventy years of captivity were nearly

ended, Daniel understood that the chastisement of God for the unbelief of the children of Israel was almost at an end.

He wrote, "In the first year of his (Darius) reign I Daniel understood by books the number of years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by

"Daniel's example of prayer and confession is given for our instruction and encouragement."

prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession." Dan. 9:2-4. Daniel continued to confess his own sins and also the sins of his people. If only Daniel's example had been followed by God's people before the seventy years captivity they would never have suffered as they did.

"Daniel's example of prayer and confession is given for our instruction and encouragement. For nearly seventy years, Israel had been in captivity. The land which God had chosen for His own possession was given into the hands of the heathen. The beloved city, the recipient of heaven's light, once the joy of the whole earth, was now despised and degraded. The temple that had contained the ark of God's covenant and the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, was in ruins. Its very site was desecrated by unholy feet. Faithful men who knew of the former glory were filled with anguish at the desolation of the holy house that had distinguished Israel as God's chosen people. These men had been witnesses to the denunciations of God because of the sins of His people. They had been witnesses to the fulfillment of His word. They had been witnesses also to the promises of His favor if Israel would return to God, and walk circumspectly before Him.

Aged, gray-headed pilgrims went up to Jerusalem to pray amid its ruins. They kissed its stones, and wet them with their tears, as they entreated the Lord to have mercy on Zion, and cover her with the glory of His righteousness. Daniel knew that the appointed time for Israel's captivity was nearly ended; but he did not feel that because God had promised to deliver them, they themselves had no part to act. With fasting and contrition he sought the Lord, confessing his own sins and the sins of the people."

—*Review and Herald*, Feb. 9, 1897.

While Daniel was praying, God honored the contrition of His faithful servant and sent Gabriel to encourage and enlighten him and through him, God's people. The promise that they would be released after the end of the seventy years would be fulfilled. Daniel's great hope was that the temple at Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but Gabriel's message was that there was no hope in the temple on the earth, even though it would be rebuilt.

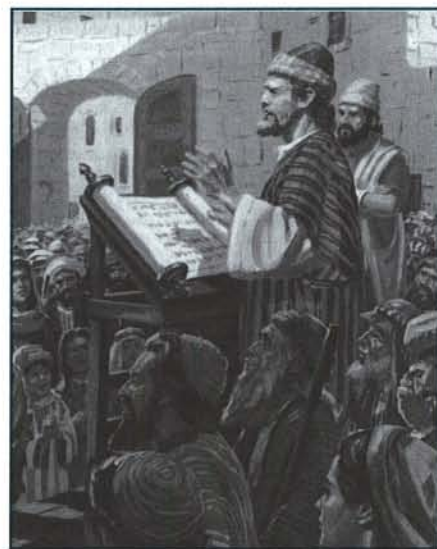
Called of God

Following the line of the prophecy that the sanctuary would be cleansed, brought the mind to the closing of the prophetic periods in 1844. At that time, after the first and second angels' messages of Revelation chapter 14, a third angel was to commence his work. Then God raised up a people to carry the message of the down-trodden law and to raise up the standard of the fourth commandment that had been left to trail in the dust for many centuries.

Seventh-day Adventists were called of God to carry a special message to the world in the closing time of earth's history. They were called to lift up the law of God and to direct the attention of the people to the work of Christ their Saviour on their behalf in the heavenly sanctuary in the work of the investigative judgment. Sadly, the luster of the message gradually became tarnished as spiritual pride began to develop, until eventually the Lord sent a special message to them. "You will meet with those who will say, 'You are too much excited over the matter. You

are too much in earnest. You should not be reaching for the righteousness of Christ, and making so much of that. You should preach the law.' As a people we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa, that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. We must not trust in our own merits at all, but in the merits of Jesus of Nazareth." — *Ibid.*, March 11, 1890.

A people who professed to keep the law of God were gradually slipping into spiritual poverty. Under pretext of standing for the law of God, they largely rejected the wondrous message of Christ our Righteousness; and with this rejection they put themselves where they were to be tested to see if they truly would uphold the law of God. Within a few years there came a crisis and the people who claimed to uphold the law of God openly rejected that law by lowering the standard of their recognition of that law by breaking two of the ten commandments. They stated on August 14, 1914: "While we stand on the foundation of the Holy Scriptures,



Ezra's call for revival

we seek to fulfill the precepts of Christendom, keeping the Rest Day (Saturday), that God established in the beginning, by endeavoring to put aside all work on that day. Still, in times of stress, we have bound

ourselves together in defense of the Fatherland, and under these circumstances we will also bear arms on Saturday (Sabbath)." H. F. Schubert, President German Union. This and other similar statements were never fully withdrawn, and to this day the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a certain ambiguity toward the ten commandments.

Strangely, it was seventy years from its inception till they took this unhappy decision. But one is tempted to ask, Why? Perhaps we should look back again at ancient Israel. Whenever there is a lessening of basic principles, a loosening of the guidelines of real truth, then there will be a retraction from previously held positions. Israel was indicted for:

men and women stood firm in obedience to the law of God, upholding both the fourth and the sixth commandments. At the conclusion of the war, they were able to find each other and in the year 1925 they organized themselves as a world body to spread the message as they saw it—as it had been given them by the prophet, clearly from the word of God. From that beginning, the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement has continued the work of the Third Angel's message, recognizing with it the work of that other angel of Revelation 18.

We must not forget

Now it has been 70 years since the official inception of the Reform

Ocean. Just a few meters away, such a small difference, but what a different result.

Our decisions may be just like that. The track of truth and error may be very close together; so close that it is sometimes difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. It is so easy to make a decision based on rationalization—some little trick of reasoning that appears right, but deceptively so. The gradual slide of Israel into idolatry, the gradual slide into worldliness by the Adventist people, the simple arguments by which it is possible to turn truth into error, to make black white—this is the most dangerous possibility before the people of God.

Those are in the most dangerous position who forget the lessons of the past. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11.

But there is one more thing we should remember. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." Isa. 51:1. We should never forget our roots. It has often been stated that those who forget the lessons of history, are condemned to repeat the mistakes of history: and those who forget the dealing of God with His people in the past will no doubt suffer the same results as those who forgot the leading of God in the past.

Then let us remember, "We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." —*Review and Herald*, October 12, 1905.

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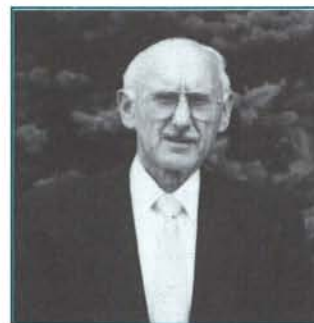
New GC headquarters in Roanoke, Virginia, dedicated in June 1995

Refusal to listen to the voice of the prophet, building themselves up in their own pride, turning away from God, and disregarding the law of God, especially the Sabbath! Perhaps W. W. Prescott spoke more clearly than he realized.

That apostasy from the truth brought to view another people who were to carry the truth further. Those who could not accept the statements of the leading brethren abrogating the law of God, on protest, were disfellowshipped. In sixteen different countries, without knowledge of what was happening in the other countries,

Movement; and naturally the question comes to us, What shall we do at such a time?

In South Africa through the city of Johannesburg runs a ridge of mountains, the Witwatersrand (white water ridge). This line of hills is a watershed. Rain falling toward the south side flows into Klipspruit and then into the Orange River which flows into the Atlantic Ocean on the Skeleton Coast, the dry desert of the west coast of Africa. Rain falling a few meters to the north will eventually run into the Limpopo river and thence through Mozambique into the South Indian



Neville S. Brittain, GC president 1991–1995.

17th G.C. Session

“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.” “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God.” Joel 2:21, 23 (first part).

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.... Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.” Psalm 107:1-3, 32.

This was a very eventful year for our church—1995. The Lord has blessed our people especially with a small but beautiful headquarters building, after so many years of wandering in “tents.” Our hearts are full of gratitude to the Lord for His blessings, and for the brethren who have faithfully contributed with their construction abilities, monetary funds, and moral support to make this project a reality. We are very thankful for what God has given us. The Spirit of Prophecy states that properties bring stability to the movement.

After 70 years of the organization of our Movement, our 17th General Conference spiritual gathering was held from August 29 - 31, 1995. These meetings were held at the Sports Complex in Ploiesti, Romania, with an estimated attendance of 4,600.

This issue of the *Reformation Herald* has been dedicated exclusively to inform our membership about the 17th GC Session. In the next pages we will bring you some highlights of what transpired at the meetings, and if you were not there, you missed something good!

Spiritual convention

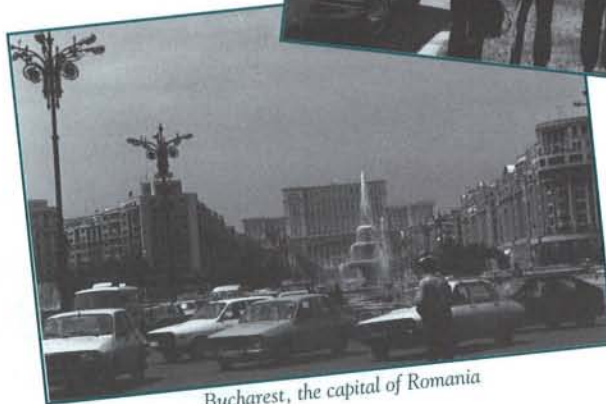
Romania is one of the countries



Some who attended the meetings in Ploiesti



This sports arena was the site of the general meetings



Bucharest, the capital of Romania

that has been considered as the “birthplace” of the Reform Movement. The Romanian Union was a gracious host for these large meetings. Not that it made their work any easier, but we are happy to say that they must be accustomed to huge crowds since their membership is over 4,200 by the time of this printing.

The brethren who were the ushers did very well in keeping everything under control, especially

when it was mealtime. Moving almost 5,000 people from the meeting hall to the two places where the food was being served three times a day,

needed some foresight and planning, and they had it. All the meals were free to the thousands of guests present. Buses were lined up at the curb when the meetings ended, and everyone was taken a few miles away to the other side of town where the food was served and where the sleeping quarters were located.

During those three days, it was quite hot and being in those buses full to capacity, seated or standing, was quite a feat! The mixture of languages

being spoken was most interesting. Suddenly someone would start singing a hymn and the whole bus would accompany, everyone in their own language. No worldly music for the bus trips, but songs of praise! Also while waiting at the door for the meals, there always seemed to be



Yugoslavian choir

an appeal was made to those who had not yet decided to follow Christ. They were invited to come forward and over 200 persons filled the front area, and a special prayer was offered for them. We were later informed that among those who came forward was a man who had walked far away from God. His experience is related in this issue by Bro. Valerie Riaboi from Ukraine. Only the Lord knows the future of those souls who desire salvation, and God uses various methods to attract them to the gospel.

Many tried to conquer the language barrier by communicating through body language, and at times it

was hilarious to watch it. Nothing reminds us more of the effects of the tower of Babel than at multi-national meetings such as these. Since Latin is the root of many languages, with a little effort one could certainly pick up words and meanings here and there. We noticed, though, since there is freedom now in Romania, a lot of people are trying to communicate in English as a nearly universal language. The beautiful thing was that with patience, they could figure out things and communicate fairly well. Even though many brethren had never seen each other before, somehow they all felt part of this large worldwide family. That is a very well-known trait among the brethren and sisters of the Reform Movement.

After the three days of spiritual meetings, the delegates representing the various Unions, Fields, and Missions were bused to Voineasa, in the province of Vilcea, to a hotel facility right in the middle of the gorgeous Carpathian mountains. This location is approximately six hours away from Bucharest, the capital of Romania. Here is where we beheld some of the most beautiful scenes in the world.

About the country itself, Romania now has a greater number of automobiles compared to 1991, or so it seemed to us. Modern gas stations were opening everywhere. The country is moving forward economically. Referring especially to Fagaras,

someone who would start the singing.

The messages were delivered with much power by the designated brethren, interspersed with musical items. Choirs from different regions presented lovely hymns to the glory of our God. Many of the choirs had cassettes available which were offered at the entrance of the meeting place. There was a large representation from Ukraine and their choir rendered beautiful hymns. According to these brethren, that was their mini-choir. They told us that the whole choir was on their way to Romania, but at the border, the patrol sent about a third of them back. What a disappointment to those left behind!

On the last day of the meetings,



Ladies' quartet from the Ukraine

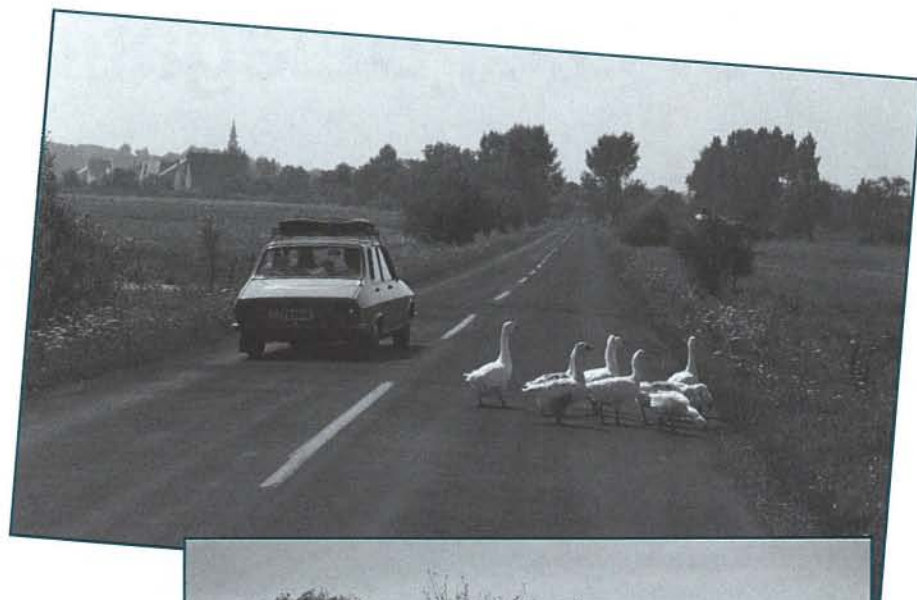


Romanian choir with children

where the Romanian Union headquarters is located, loaded trucks with their cargo were going places, causing traffic even during the night. We could see a lot of people with the entrepreneurial spirit; they just open a window, or set up a bench in front of their house and sell different items—fruits, vegetables, sodas, gum, clothes, shoes—whatever they could think of. Open-air markets with fresh fruits and vegetables were seen. There are a lot of little stores everywhere and the people in general appeared happier than a few years ago. Friends were talking in the streets, neighbors were calling each other across the road, children were playing together on the sidewalk around their apartments. We could sense the absence of fear. Not that all their troubles are over, but a change for the better seems to be going on, and we thank the Lord for allowing this freedom to continue.

While traveling on some back roads, however, one could tell that life was still hard for many of the people; the old ways are very much alive still. Horse-drawn wagons filled with hay were scenes very nostalgic to many of us, but denoting hard work. There were a lot of beautiful craft items, and fine handmade embroidery, especially on tablecloths, blouses, and doilies—and the sellers were ready to strike a deal anytime. We saw fine lamb's wool sweaters and leather coats at real bargain prices. Then there were the shepherds with their flocks. Some would be crossing the road while others would wait by the side until the traffic was clear, and the sheep were very attentive to the voice of the shepherd, not one would run into the cars. There were flocks high up in the mountains in search of the most gorgeous green pastures one has ever seen.

The Carpathian mountains were a pure inspiration. There were hundreds of waterfalls cascading down the mountains from different heights. As we passed through, admiring the scenery, we drank of the clear, icy water, even though it was the end of summer. Very refreshing! We understood that the hymn "How Great Thou Art" was written under the



Typical scenes in Romania



inspiring views of the Carpathian mountains. No wonder atheism could not survive in a place like this. The

magnificent handiwork of God is everywhere!



17th G.C. Delegation Session

On the morning of September 4, 1995, the 17th General Conference Delegation of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement opened its session in Voineasa, Romania.

After the brethren of the previous Executive Committee took their places at the rostrum, Bro. Neville S. Brittain called the session to order. A silent prayer was offered, and the hymn "To God Be the Glory" was sung. The deep voices of the brethren rang throughout the halls assigned to our meetings. It sounded like a men's choir, and it was beautiful to hear. Bro. Daniel Dumitru offered the opening prayer, beseeching the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to be present in our midst.



Delegates for the 17th GC Session



This building was our home for 3 weeks



Scenery behind our hotel building

Bro. Brittain welcomed all the delegates assembled, and delivered a stirring message emphasizing our responsibility as Reformers in these last days. He paralleled our work with that of John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. "Seventy years had deep significance for ancient Israel, and in 1995—at the 70th anniversary of the

General Conference of the Reform Movement established in Gotha, Germany—what meaning will it have for our Movement? Will we come out completely from the captivity of the world, or will we follow other paths, choosing rather to adopt the philosophies of those who would turn our hearts away from a full consecration

to God? At this session we may be at the crossroads of the future of our Movement, and great is our responsibility as delegates. As plans are being made for the future of our work, the many so-called 'small' decisions today, may be the ones that will effectively lead the church tomorrow either into great apostasy or to great spiritual revival. Which shall it be? Lest we forget from whence we were dug and be lifted up in pride, let us turn to the Lord and His law, and not forget the words of His prophet."

The roll was called and each delegate presented their respective credentials evidencing their eligibility to be present at the session. There were a few delegates who would still be arriving within the next few days. On this first day, 127 delegates were

present, and Bro. Brittain declared the session opened and legal to transact business. The total number of delegates should have been 139, but eight of them were not able to be present; therefore the session functioned with 131 delegates, representing a worldwide membership of 23,772, as of December 31, 1994.

There were some new Unions, Fields, and Missions which needed to be recognized by the delegation in session, and that was one of the first steps. The following were recognized

and we are happy to announce that the Reform Movement has already reached 81 countries and territories.

Continuing with the secretary's report, and as a passing remark only, since enough information was already given on the subject, as of June 1995 since our headquarters officially moved just across the driveway, the address has been adjusted; now the correct address is 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24019. There were two post office boxes used in the past, that is, 7239 and 7240, so, effective immediately, we will begin

God. Their works do follow them: Andre Cekan from Brazil; Dura Milic, Yugoslavia; Hanz Walter, Germany; J. B. Lalelorang, Indonesia; Joash Bila Owili, Kenya; Paule Terletzki, Ukraine; Zachariah Pauleogio, Ukraine; Joan Pruna, Romania; Floria Popa, Romania; Joan Buftea, Romania; Joan Terente Tomoiaga, Romania; Lucas Lebisi, Africa; Josip Zic, Yugoslavia; C. T. Stewart, Australia.

Still considering the secretary's report, the delegates were also informed on the progress of the cancellation of the trademark registration of the name Seventh-day Adventist. After being called twice to testify in behalf of the SDA brother who is bringing this subject to court, we now await the judge's verdict, and we can only trust that the guiding protection of God will prevail in order for His work in the earth to continue to go forward as needed.

Reports from the various officers continued to be presented: the auditor was next, then the Finance



View from the hotel door

and added as members of the General Conference worldwide organization: Spain Mission, Ghana Mission, Bolivian Union, Martinique Field, China Mission, Slovakia and Czech Republic Mission, Finland Mission, and Costa Rica Mission.

The officers of the current administration, that is, the president, vice president, and secretary presented their reports. Considering with more detail the secretary's report, we were thankful to the Lord that during the last four years, the records showed that there was an increase in membership from 20,769 in 1991 to 23,772 as of December 31, 1994. During this last quadrennium, there was an increase, but sad to say, there were also losses in our camp. There was a loss of approximately 3,150, due to death and apostasy.

But we must go always forward

merging all correspondence to the number easier to remember, which is 7240. Therefore, the new postal address should read: P. O. Box 7240, Roanoke, Virginia 24019. The telephone number has a new area code: (540) 362-1800; the FAX (540) 366-2814.

The secretary's report also informed the delegates that the progress of the book *History of the Reform Movement* is slowly going forward, and due to the busy schedule of the brethren involved in this project, mainly Bro. A. Balbach, this manuscript is currently going through its fourth revision. The gathering of information is about over, and hopefully the book will be ready soon.

We were also informed that during the last four years, several of our ministers were laid to rest in their dusty beds, awaiting the voice of



Doctrinal Committee at work

Committee, and finally the treasurer's report. All was found to be in order, and we were happy to see the progress in the church of God.

More reports were presented by the regional secretaries of the various regions, such as: Central America, Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, South America, and the Pacific. Also called to render their reports were the brethren responsible for their respective departments, such as the Editorial, Colporteur, Educational, Missionary, Health Missionary, Public Relations, Sabbath School, Reformation

Herald Publishing, and Young Peoples' Department. The standing committees, such as the Doctrinal and the Bylaws Committees, presented their reports as well.

A temporary chairman and secretary for the session had to be found, and the result of the ballot was that Bro. Francisco Devai and Bro. Alfredo C. Sas were elected temporary chairman and secretary, respectively. Bro. Brittain then delivered his closing address, stating that all is in the hands of God. All the officers of the current administration laid down their responsibilities, and new ones were to be elected.

Bro. F. Devai praised the Lord for the opportunity granted him to serve in the capacity of temporary chairman. He read from *Testimonies to*

Nominating Committee composed of 19 brethren from several Unions and regions. Temporary committees were

pledged himself to be faithful to the principles of the Bible and truths of the Spirit of Prophecy, and to main-



Delegates from the European Region



Delegates from the South American Region

Ministers, page 300, that God will take the reins of the cause in His own hands and with simple means He will promote His work. Only if the glory of man is laid in the dust and God's character is revealed in us, by words and deeds, will we have power to give this last message to the world—the message that began in 1888.

Many psalms and Bible verses were recorded as a sign of gratitude to God for His loving-kindness and protection extended to His people during the last four years.

The delegates then elected a

formed such as Finance, composed of 5 members; Bylaws composed of 7 members; and Doctrinal composed of 17 members from various Unions and regions. The remaining delegates made part of the Plans Committee.

New officers

The first recommendation from the Nominating Committee came and it was for the president. After a secret ballot by all delegates, Bro. Alfredo C. Sas was elected president. He thanked all the brethren for the confidence shown to him, and

tain our Principles of Faith. He asked for the cooperation of all, so that we may see a converted people. He stated he did not want to be the head or leader, but to work together and join efforts so that God may give us the victory. Afterwards, all the brethren greeted Bro. Sas and wished him God's blessing in his new task.

The second recommendation from the Nominating Committee was for the election of the vice president. According to our bylaws there is a provision for more than one if necessary, therefore, two brethren were elected for this position, Bro. Neville S. Brittain and Bro. D. Sureshkumar. Bro. Ruffo Lopez was reelected treasurer, and Bro. Davi Paes Silva was elected secretary. The complete list of officers for this new administration is printed on the next pages.

The Bylaws Committee brought their recommendations for amendments in the bylaws, always having in view the 2/3 majority of votes needed for any amendment to pass. Finally, the bylaws as a whole were unanimously approved, becoming effective as soon as this delegation session is over. Also these bylaws are to be adapted and implemented in all Unions, Fields, and Missions through-

out the world for consistency of principles.

RESOLUTIONS: Bylaws

The bylaws as adopted include some parts which may be of interest to many brethren, and hereunder we print two articles:

"ARTICLE XII - Term of Office and Transfer of Responsibilities

"The term of office and transfer of responsibilities of those elected at the General Conference session shall be as follows:

"a. Officers of the General Conference, members of the Executive Committee (Board of Directors), the Council, Regional Secretaries, Departmental/



Delegates from the North American Region



Delegates from the Central American and Caribbean Regions

Movement, during the early General Conference sessions, some resolutions were voted upon which had no Bible verses or Spirit of Prophecy references appended to them, and there was a need to clarify some of our present positions, the Permanent Doctrinal Committee spent several weeks, before this 17th Delegation Session, restudying point-by-point and providing Bible and Spirit of Prophecy references where needed. The points that needed amendment and approval were:

RESOLVED, That:

"Medical workers in our institutions. We recommend that the following references be added (to Resolution 21 of 1928, regarding Sabbathkeeping): 4T 539; MM 216; 7T 106; 5T 172."

RESOLVED, That:

"Birth control. We endorse Resolution 11 of 1931. However, we wish to recommend that the last sentence be omitted, and to be replaced by the following: 'We should educate our people in self-control.' We endorse the reference given with the addition of the following: 1 Thess. 4:3-5; SA 47; AH 121-128; 2T 89-93; 3T 362-380, 487; Heb. 13:4."

RESOLVED, That:

"Baptism of SDAs. We recom-

Institutional Leaders/Directors, and other persons holding General Conference credentials shall hold office from the time of their election until they have rendered their reports to the General Conference delegates in session and/or until their successors have been elected and appear and enter into their office.

"b. The new president and the Council shall meet immediately after the session and make all arrangements for the transfer of responsibilities to the new officers.

"c. The General Conference president may be elected consecutively to the same office for only two

(2) terms. All other officers of the General Conference may be elected consecutively to the same office for only three (3) terms."

"ARTICLE XVI - Voting on Major Issues

"The required vote for approval or adoption of major issues and amendments shall be in accordance with the following:

"All principal (major) motions dealing with Doctrine must be approved by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the delegates representing the worldwide membership."

RESOLUTIONS: Various

Whereas in the beginning of our

mend that all who come to the Reform Movement from the SDA Church be rebaptized. Isa. 1:2, 3; Jer. 2:13; Acts 19:1-6; Ev 372-375."

RESOLVED, That:

"Tithe on property. Resolution 16a of 1934. We propose that the decision should be as follows: In the following questions we are unanimously of the opinion that when souls are taken into the church they are to consider it a privilege to return to God the tithe on the property possessed. When and how to return this tithe is to be left to the conscience of the individual. References should be as appended, with the addition of CS 99, 100."

RESOLVED, That:

"Traditional tribal marriages. The recommendation reads: 'In the matter of traditional or tribal marriages, we recommend that all marriages be legalized.' After eliminating the Bible verses that were recommended by the Temporary Doctrinal Committee (Acts 15:20; Eph. 5:3), and adding other references, 2SP 221; 1 Cor. 14:40; Rom. 13:1-7; Gen. 24:67) this point passed by the majority."

The use of television was discussed thoroughly by many brethren who had the opportunity to present the pros and cons on this subject. We have several clear resolutions passed on this issue during past delegation sessions. Our views have not changed. The delegation agreed that this instrument is being used by Satan to lower the standards of the church and make it conform to the world. What was not clear was our stand on the use of the video, since many brethren must use the television set for their camcorders, and to watch evangelistic tapes and educational programs. Therefore, it was

RESOLVED, That:

"In the case of videos, we can accept it only for evangelistic and educational purposes. We call upon every minister and worker to close the door against the improper use of videos by setting the right example and thereby closing the door against the entrance of sin into the church (Isa. 42:19, 20; Psalm 101:3; 1 Peter 5:3; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Matthew 5:29,



GC presidents: Brn. F. Devai (1967-1979); W. Volpp (1979-1983); J. Moreno (1983-1991); Neville S. Brittain (1991-1995); Alfredo C. Sas (1995 to present)

30; Luke 17:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 5T 172; 4T 652, 653)."

Whereas there was the understanding that children who were born out of wedlock could not be ordained to the ministry, after much study by the brethren, the Temporary Doctrinal Committee recommended, and it was

RESOLVED, That:

"In our understanding of Deuteronomy 23:2 the requirements for a bastard have nothing to do with the church today (Judges 11:1, 2) as this requirement covered the matter of segregation of the children of Israel from the Gentiles. All authorities cited define a bastard in the sense of Deuteronomy 23:2 as one who was born of mixed Jewish and Gentile parentage, not as one born out of wedlock. Acts 16:1-3. While the Spirit of Prophecy is directly silent on this subject, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 306 states that the child is not guilty of the sins of the father, which is in harmony with Ezekiel 18:19, 20; Jeremiah 31:30. We, therefore, suggest that we cannot oppose the ordination of a man born out of wedlock on the basis of Deuteronomy 23:2, as Paul did not apply this law in the case of Timothy. If the candidate fulfills the conditions of Leviticus 21:7, 13, 14, 18-21; Ezekiel 44:22, 23; 1 Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9, then each candidate must be considered on his own merit.

"FURTHER, in considering the matter of the requirements for ordination as stated in the Ministerial

Guide, we can find no Biblical nor Spirit of Prophecy support for the requirement that one considered for ordination must not be married to one born out of wedlock. (Eze. 18:19, 20; Jer. 31:30; PP 306.) We therefore recommend generally that this requirement be deleted from the Ministerial Guide."

RESOLVED, That the paragraph dealing with rebaptism read as follows:

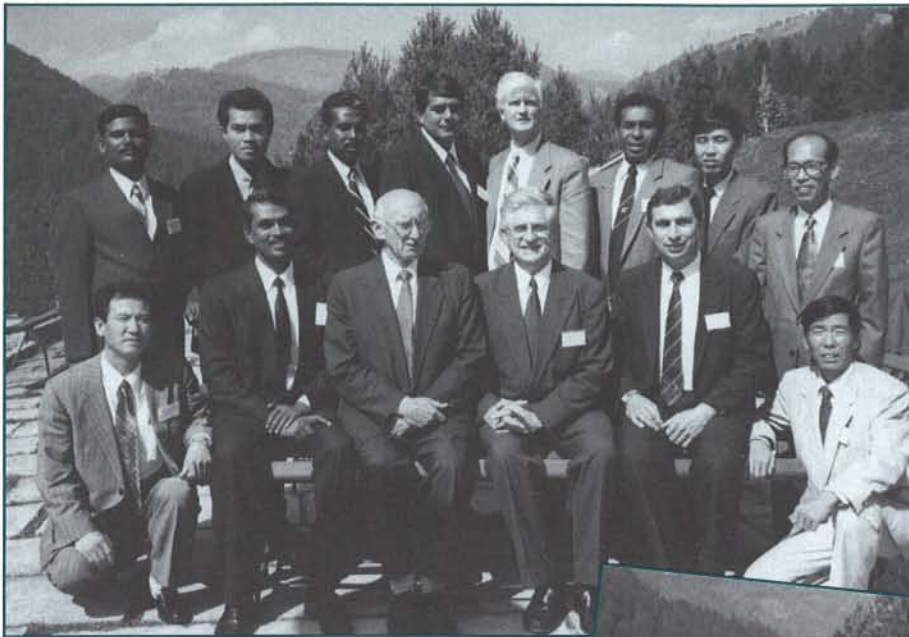
"Whereas some Fields have questioned the matter of repeated rebaptism, we advise that great care be taken in determining the reconversion of the candidate especially if they have already been rebaptized once. 5T 172; RH May 21, 1901; 7MR 267."

RESOLVED, That the resolution on vaccination read as follows:

"Whereas the matter of vaccination as stated in the Principles of Faith, Point 19, has been queried, we recommend: That as medical opinion is divided on the question of vaccination, we cannot force any member's conscience on this matter, and

"FURTHER, that our members should be educated in this question with available material on the basis of 2 Selected Messages, page 281, 'Drugs should seldom be used.' Temperance, p. 88."

Whereas the subject of the nature of Christ was discussed in the Standing Doctrinal Committee as well as in the Temporary Doctrinal Committee during the session, and due to



Delegates from the Asian and Pacific Regions

the complexity of this subject, it was
RESOLVED, That:

"We recommend that the wording in Resolution 44 of 1987 remain as is and that we append the following references: MB 116; GC 623; 5BC 1128, and that we also include the following: 'We believe nothing more and nothing less than what is stated in the references given.'"

Whereas after several brethren presented their ideas on the Lord's Supper cup, and since we have resolutions on this matter from the inception of the Reform Movement, and confirmations of our position in Resolution 32 of 1959; Resolution 34 of 1983; and Resolution 54 of 1991, it was

RESOLVED, That:

"Whereas the question of the use of the common cup was considered, after a lengthy discussion, it was decided that we recommend that we continue as is our practice."

Whereas the Plans Committee brought a motion that since the Colporteur Department needs funds to function properly and to hold seminars to motivate this department around the world, it was

"RESOLVED, That the proposed 10 cents (US) to be charged in the sale of each book worldwide, would be used to develop the GC Colporteur Department. This motion was referred

to the GC Council to implement the decision."

Through the Health Department a proposal was brought that if every member would give US\$1.00 four times a year, or through the 13th Sabbath Offering, we could get funds to make this department function, it was

"RESOLVED, That it be accepted and be referred to the GC Council for implementation."

There were other recommendations from the various temporary committees which were not deliberated in the delegation session and these were referred to the GC Council

for decision and implementation.

If time shall last, and if we are privileged to hold another delegation session, all future delegates are advised to make necessary travel and visa arrangements so that they will be present at the meetings for the entire time and remain until the end of the session, no matter what their plans of travel may be.

As this session was coming to an end, we felt the presence of the Lord in the delegation as a result of the constant prayers of the brethren from all parts of the world. We realize that the enemy of God and man was very concerned and unhappy with the smooth running of the session, but we felt on certain days that heaven was



Delegates from the African Region

very near to us and that Satan's plans to bring trouble and disunity among us were thwarted. Many tears were shed and many earnest prayers were offered to the throne of mercy. Important issues were discussed and all was done in unity, and we spent blessed moments together in brotherly love. We trust that with the information given through this publication, you have had a glimpse of the responsibilities entrusted to the delegates in the "assembly of the elders" (Ps. 107:32).

On September 21, early in the morning, the delegation met for the last time. Several brethren had to

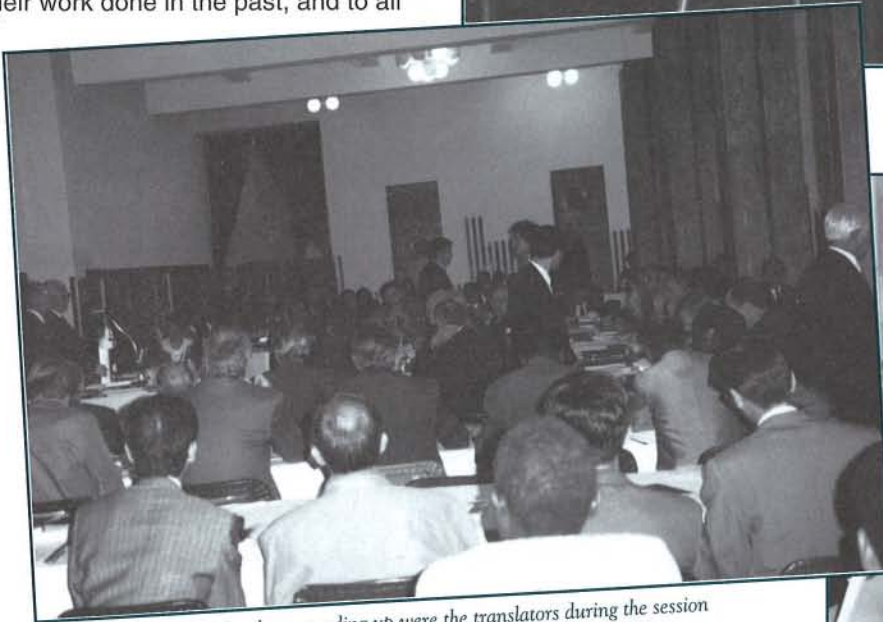
leave due to their visas expiring early. Bro. Sas, our new president, came to the rostrum, and stated:

"At this moment, I wish to thank the Romanian Union, in the name of the 17th General Conference Session for their hospitality, in providing accommodations to us and, I know that there were a lot of expenses. . . . I appreciate all that was done for us, and we ask you to forgive us our shortcomings in our association with you. May the Lord reward you abundantly.

"Many are not going to work with us at the General Conference Council, but I do not want to forget their valuable contributions in the past administration. We thank them for their work done in the past, and to all



Many times during the sessions, the presence of the Lord was felt very near



The brethren standing up were the translators during the session

those that did not receive an office in this period, please pray for us and support us as you have done until now."

There was a request and a motion made that the following paragraph be recorded as part of the minutes of this session:

"In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as Leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall


forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. We are now a strong people, if we will put our trust in the Lord; for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for." General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 24.

Closing of the session

As the check-out time in the hotel was fast approaching, Bro. Daniel Dumitru motioned, and it was seconded by Bro. D. P. Silva, to close the session. Bro. Sas then made the final



Bro. Tomoiaga distributing to each delegate the souvenirs presented by the Romanian Union

declaration: "In the name of the General Conference and all the officers, I declare that the 17th General Conference Session of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement is closed." Bro. Sas then invited all delegates to sing the hymn, "Work for the Night Is Coming." Bro. Tomoiaga offered the closing prayer, and Bro. Francisco Devai pronounced the final benediction. 

Memories...

*"From India
with love"*

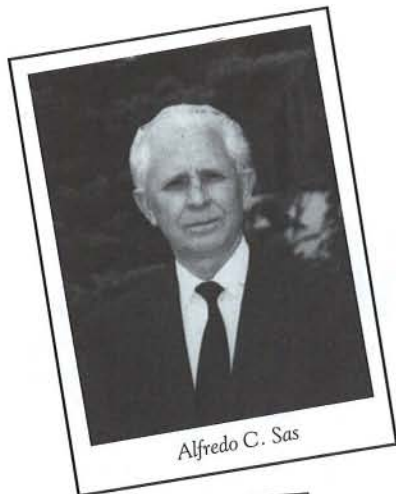


No chopsticks!

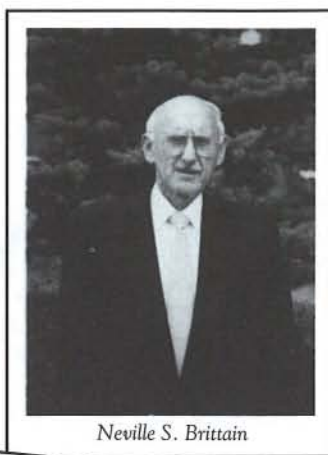
*Every morning, every break, and every evening, herbal teas
were always available*



Preparing for pictures



Alfredo C. Sas



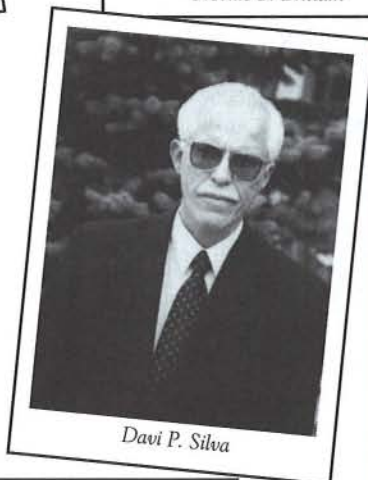
Neville S. Brittain



D. Sureshkumar



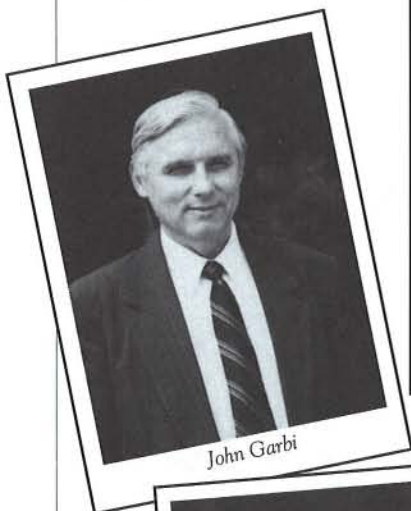
Ruffo Lopez



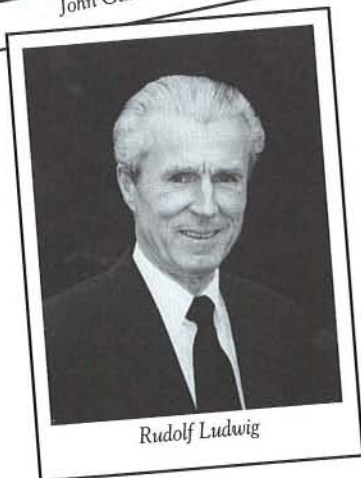
Davi P. Silva



D. Sammy Doss



John Garbi



Rudolf Ludwig



Daniel Dumitru

President:	<i>Alfredo C. Sas</i>
Vice Presidents:	<i>Neville S. Brittain D. Sureshkumar</i>
Secretary:	<i>Davi P. Silva</i>
Treasurer:	<i>Ruffo Lopez T.</i>
Executive Committee:	<i>Alfredo C. Sas Neville S. Brittain Davi Paes Silva Ruffo Lopez T. Daniel Dumitru</i>
General Conference Council:	<div> <i>Alfredo C. Sas D. Sureshkumar Ruffo Lopez John Garbi Rudolf Ludwig Mario Alvarado Ion Tomoiaga Simeon Kravatskii Benjamin Burec Doru Laza</i> </div> <div> <i>Neville S. Brittain Davi Paes Silva Daniel Dumitru Sammy Doss Jose Romero Branislav Jaksic P. D. Lausevic Jaime Campos Gerson Barros</i> </div>
Regional Secretaries:	<div> <i>Africa Asia Pacific Europe Central America South America North America</i> </div> <div> <i>Sammy Doss D. Sureshkumar B. Jaksic R. Ludwig J. Romero M. Alvarado J. Garbi</i> </div>
Board of Directors:	<i>Alfredo Carlos Sas Neville S. Brittain Ruffo Lopez T. Daniel Dumitru Davi Paes Silva</i>
Auditor:	<i>Josue Devai</i>
Bylaws Committee:	<i>Walter Lukic Benjamin Burec Neville S. Brittain</i>



Jose Romero



Ion Tomoiaga



Simeon Kravatskii



Branko Jaksic



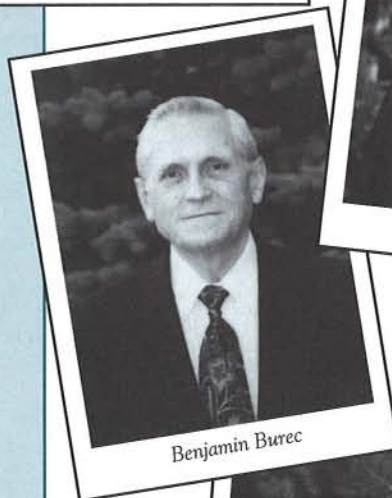
Peter D. Lausevic



Mario Alvarado



Jaime L. Campos



Benjamin Burec



Doru Laza



Gerson S. Barros

Departmental Secretaries:

Colporteur
Educational
Sabbath School
Young People
RHPA
Missionary
Medical Miss.

Jaime Campos
D. Sureshkumar
Benjamin Burec
B. Jaksic
Daniel Dumitru
Gerson Barros
Doru Laza

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W. Volpp
Rudolf Ludwig
Ion Tomoiaga
Ari Goncalves
Samuel Diaz
B. Jaksic
Simeon Kravatskii
Marin Barbu
John Garbi
Peter D. Lausevic
Davi P. Silva

Finance Committee: V. Cimera
Josue Devai
John Baer

G.C. Officers and Delegates from the North American Region



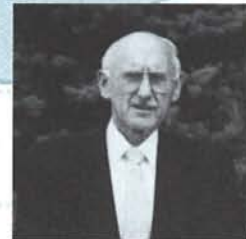
Alfons Balbach

69 years old; minister; editor of the Sabbath Bible Lessons.



Alfredo Carlos Sas

63 years old; minister; elected GC president; member GC Executive Committee and GC Council.



Neville Stuart Brittain

67 years old; minister; GC vice president; member GC Executive Committee and GC Council.



Ruffo Lopez

53 years old; re-elected GC treasurer; member GC Executive Committee and GC Council.



Daniel Dumitru

63 years old; minister; secretary for the Publishing Department; member of the GC Executive Committee and GC Council.



Peter Daniel Lausevic

35 years old; minister; president of the South East U.S. Field; GC Council member.



Ruth Lausevic

Treasurer of the Southwest U.S. Field.



Benjamin Burec

63 years old; secretary for the departments of Sabbath School and Public Relations; member GC Council.



John Garbi

59 years old; minister; re-elected regional secretary for North America; member of the GC Council.



Walter Lukic

Leader of the East Canadian Field.



Ljuban Vukotic

Minister; president of the Eastern U.S. Field.



Henry Portalanza

Bible worker in the Northwest U.S. Field.



Radivoj Radda Vukovic

74 years old; secretary-treasurer of the Northwest U.S. Field.

Delegates from the Pacific Region



Branislav Jacksic

57 years old; minister; re-elected Youth Department secretary; Pacific Region secretary; member of GC Council.



John Ciric

45 years old; minister; president of the Australasian Union.



Peter P. Jackson

Bible worker, Queensland, Australia



Dai Chun Kang

49 years old; minister in the Korean Field.



Hee Mun Woo

45 years old; minister; president of the Korean Field.



Marcel Wanegui

33 years old; Bible worker in the French Polynesia Field.

Delegates from the African Region



Caba Samuel Kalende

*38 years old; minister;
president of the Zaire
Mission.*



**Jorai Pereira da
Cruz**

*41 years old; minister;
president of the Angola
Mission.*



Musonda Lumpa

*58 years old; Field
secretary of the
Zambian Field.*



Griffiths Koopedi

*75 years old; minister in
Natal-Transvaal Field in
South Africa.*



Bunda Pamofwe

*58 years old; minis-
ter; Field president in
Zambia.*



Jordan Silindane

*59 years old; minister;
president of the Natal-
Transvaal Field in
South Africa.*

Delegates from the Asian Region



D. Samy Doss

41 years old; minister in North India; elected regional secretary for Africa; member of the GC Council.



D. Sureshkumar

52 years old; minister; regional secretary for the Asian Region; elected GC vice president; elected member of the GC Council.



Daniel C. Todavia

56 years old; minister; president of the Philippine Union.



Jong Hwan Hyun

45 years old; secretary of the publishing department of the Philippine Union.



John Frits Eitel Suoth

26 years old; assistant secretary-treasurer of the Indonesian Union; translator.



Benyamin Linga

43 years old; minister; president of the Indonesian Union.



B. Alwin Vedhasingh

Secretary of the North India Mission.

Delegates from the European Region



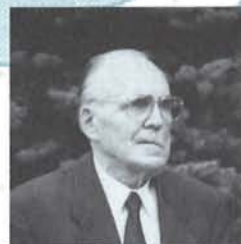
Gabrijel Popek

70 years old; minister; president of the Yugoslavian Union.



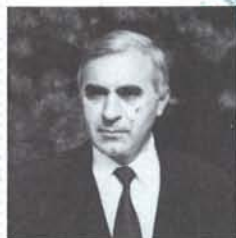
Rudolf Ludwig

Re-elected regional secretary for Europe



Wilhelm Volpp

69 years old; minister; president of the German Union.



Vasil Hristov

54 years old; leader of the Bulgarian Field.



Luiz Almeida Araújo

39 years old; minister; president of the Portuguese Field.



Emilson Motta

39 years old; ordained elder and leader of the Italian Field.



Branko Bosanac

62 years old; editor of the publishing house Yugoslavian Union.



Bela Toth

63 years old; minister; president of the Hungarian Field.



Miklos Szabo Zagoni

49 years old; ordained elder; secretary of the Hungarian Field.



Danijel Zic

47 years old; ordained elder in the Yugoslavian Union.



Hanz Woywod

46 years old; ordained elder for No. Germany.



Johann Herz

76 years old; Bible worker in So. Germany.

Delegates from the East European Union



Nicolai Arseni

41 years old; minister in Moldova.



Semion Karvatskii

43 years old; minister; president of the Union. Ukraine.



Ivan Bilich

67 years old; minister; Field leader.



Anatolii Georgievich Bogatov

47 years old; minister; Field leader. Ukraine.



Mikhailo Demian

38 years old; minister; Field leader and secretary of the East-European Union. Ukraine.



Boris Gourdouiala

33 years old; Bible worker in the Union.



Volgin Alexandr

31 years old; minister; vice president of Chernomorskogo Field in the Black Sea.



Vasili Melinciuk

64 years old; minister. Ukraine.



Petr Mangoul

37 years old; minister; vice president of the Union; Field leader in Moldova.



Valerii Riaboi

29 years old; minister; Field leader.

Delegates from the Romanian Union



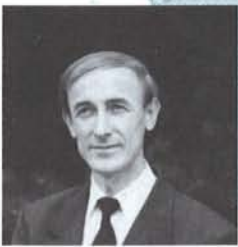
Ion Tomoiaga

*63 years old; minister;
Union president.*



Cracea Traian

*63 years old; minister;
vice president of the
Union.*



Marin I. Barbu

*39 years old; minister;
secretary of the Union;
Field leader.*



Florin Pistea

Treasurer of the Union



Vasile Camarasan

68 years old; Field leader.



Traian Borza

*46 years old; minister;
Field leader.*



Ion Daramus

*48 years old; minister in
the Union.*



Ieronim N. Dobrescu

57 years old; ordained elder in the Union.



Paul Emil

*42 years old;
minister; Field
secretary; mission-
ary department
leader.*

Delegates from the Romanian Union



Doru Marian Laza

39 years old; medical doctor.



Ruben Muresan

50 years old; minister in Union.



Vasile Buftea

45 years old; minister in the Union.



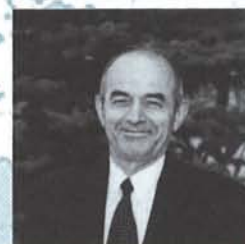
Victor Muresan

54 years old; minister; Moldova's Field leader (in Romania).



Paul Petcu

40 years old; minister; Field leader.



Ion Boge

62 years old; minister in the Romanian Union.



Valerian Raileanu

43 years old; medical doctor.



Gavril Rosca

66 years old; auditor for the Union.



Szanto Francisc

58 years old; minister.

Delegates from the South American Region



Juan Carlos Silva Alza

33 years old; ordained elder;
Field leader in the Peruvian
Union.



**Mario Alvarado
Palacios**

41 years old; minister;
superintendent of the
missionary school in Peru;
elected regional secretary
for the South American
Region; member of the GC
Council.

Not Available

Hector Horacio Choco

Plastic surgeon; welfare depart-
ment in the Bolivian Union.



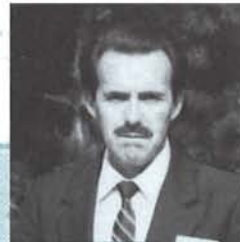
Jose Roberto Domingos

37 years old; minister; presi-
dent of the Bolivian Union.



**Joel Morales
Espinoza**

Minister; outgoing presi-
dent of the Chilean
Union; elected leader of
the Italian Field.



**Demetrio Concepcion
Alva Iglesias**

46 years old; minister;
president of the Peruvian
Union.



**Cypriano Dario
Moreyra**

40 years old; Field
leader in Argentina.



Franz Terceros Pedrazas

41 years old; president of the
South American Southern
Union.



**Marcelo Ponce
Sanchez**

30 years old; secretary of
the Chilean Union and
secretary of the Health
Department.



Samuel Diaz Vergara

50 years old; minister; vice
president and secretary of the
Peruvian Union.

Delegates from the Central American Region



Javier Díaz Alegria

28 years old; ordained elder; vice-president of the Mexican Field.



Jose Romero

48 years old; minister; regional secretary for the Central American Region; member GC Council.



Carlos Antonio Gordillo Betancourt

33 years old; minister, president of the Ecuadorian Union.



Eduardo Lainez Claros

35 years old; ordained elder; president of the Honduran Field.



Jose Angel Usuga Goez

32 years old; ordained elder in the Colombia Field; teacher of the missionary school "Beth-el" in Colombia.



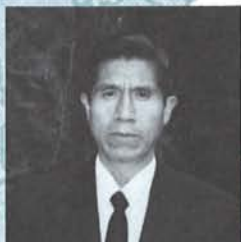
Francisco Devai Lukacin

68 years old; minister; president of the Mexican Field; former president of the GC.



Edgar Mariassouce

President of the Martinique Field.



Andres A. Decena Melendez

48 years old; superintendent of the missionary school "Beth-el" in Colombia.



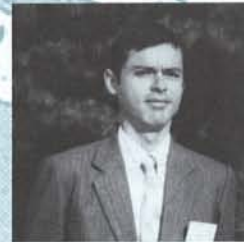
Miguel Angel Payan

33 years old; treasurer of the Dominican Republic Field; Bible worker.



Audelio Paz

37 years old; president of the Guatemalan Field.



Victor Hugo Figueroa Perez

34 years old; ordained elder and treasurer of the Ecuadorian Union and superintendent of the missionary school "Maranatha" in Ecuador.



Jose Ebroul Rivera

54 years old; ordained elder and president of the Colombian Field.



Ivan Oswaldo Castillo Santaella

37 years old; ordained elder and president of the Venezuelan Field.



Nelson Oswaldo Castillo Santaella

40 years old; ordained elder and leader of a Field.

Delegates from the South Brazilian Union



Jaime Lemes de Campos

33 years old; re-elected secretary for the GC Colporteur Department; GC Council member.



Ary Gonçalves da Silva

62 years old; minister; Union president.



Daniel Sa Freire Boarim

32 years old; outgoing secretary for the Missionary Health Department; writer; registered dietician in Brazil.



Raimundo Gomes Costa

62 years old; minister; Field leader.



Josue Devai

40 years old; accountant-auditor in the Brazilian Union South; re-elected auditor of the GC Treasury Department.



Eliseu Martins Duarte

38 years old; South Brazilian Union treasurer.



Demerval dos Santos Ferreira

44 years old; director of the Colporteur Department in the Union.



Artur Gessner

55 years old; minister; Union secretary.



Pasquale Lemmo

46 years old; ordained elder; publishing house editor.



Jose de Oliveira Lima

51 years old; minister; Field leader in south Brazil.

Delegates from the South Brazilian Union



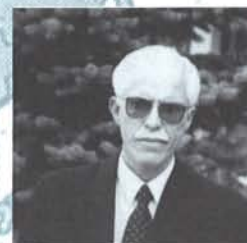
Edgard Carlos Luup

51 years old; Superintendent of the school department in Brazil; outgoing GC Educational Department secretary.



Cesar Augusto Peixoto

33 years old; leader of the Evangelism Department in the Union.



Davi Paes Silva

50 years old; outgoing regional secretary for South America; elected GC secretary; member of the GC Executive Committee, and GC Council.



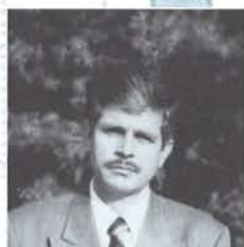
Luiz Conceicao Sales

36 years old; minister; field leader in south Brazil.



Gerson S. Barros

63 years old; re-elected secretary for the GC Missionary Department; member of the GC Council.



Jose Henrique Pereira dos Santos

Minister; field leader.



Jose Pereira de Souza

32 years old; minister; field leader in southwest Brazil.



Jose Silva

62 years old; minister in the Union.



Matheus Souza da Silva

40 years old; minister; superintendent of the missionary school.



Marcelo de Araujo Silva

32 years old; field leader in southern Brazil.

Delegates from the North Brazilian Union



Joao Moreno

63 years old; minister; member of the outgoing GC Council; former GC president.



Edson de Oliveira Custodio

37 years old; minister, Field leader in north Brazil.



Erotildes Jose de Almeida

51 years old; minister, leader of Field.



Ivan da Silva Lima

39 years old; minister; president of the Brazilian Union North.



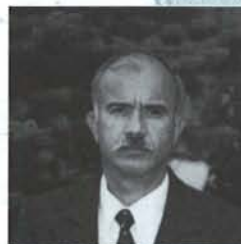
Otavio Nascimento Freitas

35 years old; regional minister in the Brazilian Union North.



Valdir Gomes

41 years old; minister; Field leader in north Brazil.



Alvaro Daniel Cardoso Menezes

47 years old; minister in the north Union.



Romulo Pereira Borges

30 years old; ordained elder; secretary of the Brazilian Union North and leader of the youth department.

Delegates from the North Brazilian Union



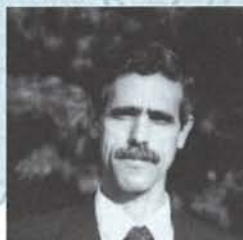
Silas Neri de Oliveira

35 years old; treasurer of the Brazilian Union North.



Moises de la Cruz Quiroga

Minister in north Brazil.



Delvacir Dias Preto

46 years old; minister; Field leader in north Brazil.



Vicente de Oliveira

66 years old; minister; Field leader in northern Brazil.



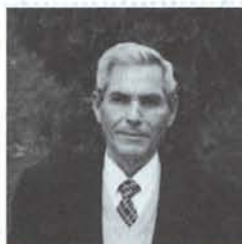
Josif Tuleu

Director of the welfare department in Brazil.



Mariano Laurentino de Santana

34 years old; colporteur leader in the Brazilian Union North.



Caetano Verto Sink

Minister in north Brazil.

Helpers During the Session



Christian Huzak

Translator: Romanian/English

Marius Stroia

Translator:
Romanian/English
German
(picture not available)



Won Jun Chang

Translator: Korean/Japanese/
English



Edgar Palmarchuk

Translator: Ukrainian/Russian/
English



Sis. Elsa Burec

Helped as secretary
during the session



Our sisters who helped in the kitchen



Experiences in the Vineyard

by Demerval Ferreira
as told on September 19, 1995, in Voineasa, Romania

“There is no higher work than evangelistic canvassing, for it involves the performance of the highest moral duties.” —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 12.

In the South Brazilian Union we have more than 380 canvassers. I thank the Lord for the privilege of having labored in this department for 27 years. I began doing colporteur work at the age of 17, and soon I will be 44, so to me this work is like the blood that runs through my veins.

We praise God that He uses the books we sell in Brazil to perform real miracles. The Spirit of Prophecy says that the books and the canvassing work are the most effective instruments to give the last message to the world.

I would like to relate two experiences: one about a physical cure and the other about a spiritual cure.

One colporteur arrived at the house of a certain couple; they were in despair because their son was seriously ill. The parents had spent all their money on the child. He had been hospitalized for many days and could be fed only intravenously since no food would stay in his stomach, not even water. He vomited up everything. After the doctors had done all they could, they advised the parents to take the child home for him to die there. This colporteur arrived at their home and found this sad picture. He assured the disheartened parents: “With faith in God, this child will be restored.”

By observing the boy's symptoms, the colporteur remembered another similar case when the mother had gotten bananas, mashed them

well, and gave them to the child—morning, noon, and evening. This couple then asked:

“Our child cannot even hold water in the stomach; how could he eat bananas?”

But the colporteur appealed to them, “Don't you have faith in God? Haven't the doctors given your child up to die? Please, why not try it?”

So the parents decided to give it a try. The colporteur invited the parents to the child's room, and fervently prayed that the Lord might intervene in his case. The parents were in no condition to buy any books; they had spent all their money. After the prayer, the colporteur urged them again to continue with the treatment, and he left.

A few months passed and the colporteur decided to return to the house to see what had finally happened in that family. As he approached the house, he could hear someone singing and was encouraged already. That was a good sign because, he thought, if there had not been a cure, there would be no singing in the house.

Since there are no doorbells in some of the poorer houses, the custom is to clap in front of the house, and he did so. The mother heard someone outside and came to the door. When she recognized the canvasser, she hugged him—weeping and talking, all at the same time. The thought came to his mind that perhaps the child had died. But she said:

“You were the angel of God, and my child is totally healed!”
“May I see the boy?” he asked.

“He is playing outside,” she said excitedly. The mother called the boy in, and the canvasser saw a completely restored, healthy-looking child.

This sickness is known as “coeliac” or “celiac” disease. The ailment causes a strong reaction to any gluten ingested. It attacks mostly small children and is very hard to cure. In the book sold in Brazil, it explains that the cure goes like this:

First day: 2 bananas at each meal.

Second day: 3 bananas at each meal.

Third day: 4 bananas at each meal.

Fourth day: 5 bananas at each meal.

After reaching 5 bananas at each meal, this is continued for 15 days. Then the amount of bananas is progressively decreased to 4, 3, and 2 bananas respectively. That was the simple cure and the mother used the regular banana. (Another brother at the delegation stated that the same results have been achieved by using apples instead of bananas.)

We praise the Lord for answered prayers and for His simple, natural remedies.

Second Experience

A colporteur sold a set of books to a lady, and by reading the books and the Bible, she understood that she could not use any ingredient with pork in it. She asked the husband to buy oil instead of lard. The husband agreed. She continued to read the Bible and also found out that Saturday is God's holy day and she began to keep the Sabbath. She also read that the food should be prepared on Friday, not on the Sabbath. Her husband was in the army, and when he came home from the barracks one Friday, she announced to him with zeal but not too much tact:

“I want to tell you that I will not cook anymore on the Sabbath, so I prepared all the food today.”

He replied, “No way, you asked me to buy oil, now you want me to eat sour food from the previous day, no way!”

“I am not asking you, I am just informing you,” she said.

"You can choose my company or your new religion," the husband answered.

She continued, "I want to keep the Sabbath."

"If you don't cook for me on Saturday, I'll leave you," the husband warned. The tension mounted, and since they also had a 10-year-old son, it was even more tragic to imagine splitting the family.

"But I want you, and I also want to keep the Sabbath," the wife insisted.

So she continued with her conviction and cooked everything on Friday. When the husband came home Saturday, as cold as the day was, she gave him "cold food." He was upset and threw the food out the window and hissed: "Don't you continue with this joke!"

But again, the next Sabbath came and he got the same treatment—"cold food." He threw everything out again, with plates, pots, and pans.

The next Sabbath came soon enough, and the wife was praying and wondering what would happen this time. He did not throw anything out but asked for fruit to eat. After several months, he surprised the wife, "I came to the conclusion that the Sabbath day is the holy day, but in the barracks I cannot keep the Sabbath, so I filled out an application to resign from the army."

While waiting for an answer from his superiors, he followed our doctrine in the matter of food, keeping of the Sabbath, and everything else he knew.

The wife then wrote a letter to the colporteur because she wanted to introduce her husband to him. But the colporteur was now working 1500 kilometers away from that location. He was tracked down by other brethren and he came to visit this lady again. The husband was introduced to the colporteur, and became a colporteur also, and for the next six years he did this work, until he got sick and died.

This lady was so convicted while the husband was alive, but after the husband died she lost her faith, and went back to the world. This experi-

ence was told almost 35 years after it had happened. Apparently, it was a nice experience but with a sad ending. How could she have abandoned the faith after being so firm? This was a puzzling question that was being related at a meeting during a colporteurs' seminar.

At this seminar there was an interested man listening intently to this particular experience, and at the end he stood up and asked, "What was the name of this lady?" But the colporteur could not remember the name of the lady since it had happened so long ago, but he remembered the name of the husband, "it was Camito." So the man stood up, came to the front of the church and began to weep:

"That woman is my mother! I was 10 years old, and all that I know she taught me, but after I grew up, I left the faith and followed my father in the military." This young boy had grown and married, and he kept telling his wife, "God has a true church on earth."

More than 30 years had passed, and he lost contact with the church. But he kept telling his wife and children that God had a true church. The man continued and told the brethren that when his daughter was 15 years old, he asked her what she wanted for her birthday.

She answered, "Dad, the only gift I want is for you to take me to the church of God on my birthday."

He explained to her that it was very difficult for him since he had lost contact with our church. So, in that big city he tried to find the church. He went to post offices and searched in the telephone books, until he found the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He wanted to see if this really was the same church of his mother. He saw it was not the one. So he continued his search and finally came across our address, and he went to see if it was the same one of his mother. By the way the sisters were dressed and by the food, he knew he had found the real church. So that week he took the daughter to the church—he took the whole family—wife and children.

Bro. Demerval was leading in this colporteur seminar when this hap-

pened one Sabbath afternoon. By then the girl was 16 years old and was later baptized, as were the other children and the wife. The father had resigned from the military and now is a member and a colporteur also, together with his sons-in-law.

Bro. Gessner testified that he baptized the son. Bro. F. Devai said he knew Bro. and Sis. Camito, and one of the sons-in-law is a colporteur leader today.


The question that everyone wanted to know was, What happened to the mother? The son continued, "My mother left the church after my father died. She remarried, and now, together with my step-father, they are both attending our baptismal class."

This happy ending brought many smiles to all faces at our delegation session in Romania, and much encouragement and confidence in the work of the colporteurs. The words of the Lord are always true:

"God has ordained the canvassing work as a means of presenting before the people the light contained in our books, and canvassers should be impressed with the importance of bringing before the world as fast as possible the books necessary for their spiritual education and enlightenment. This is the very work the Lord would have His people do at this time."—*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 6.

"By the printed page the light reaches the isolated ones, who have no opportunity to hear the living preachers. This is a most blessed missionary work. Canvassers can be the Lord's helping hand, opening doors for the entrance of truth."—*Ibid.*, p. 20.

"Publications must be multiplied, and scattered like the leaves of autumn. These silent messengers are enlightening the molding the minds of thousands in every country and in every clime."—*Ibid.*, p. 5.

"Every member of the church is to show his loyalty by inviting the thirsty to drink of the water of life. A CHAIN OF LIVING WITNESSES is to carry the invitation to the world. Will you act your part in this great work?"—*Ibid.*, p. 18 (emphasis supplied). 



The Value of a Soul!

by Gerson Barros

as told in Voineasa, Romania, on September 16, 1995

I am really happy to be a part of this assembly. We have heard wonderful experiences which have touched our hearts, and before I tell you a little experience about the value of a soul, I would like you to tell me:

What is the value of a soul? Can we determine it? If there would be only one solitary soul on earth, Jesus Christ would have died. Do we really understand, then, the value of the death of Christ? Can we place a real value or appreciate how much the Son of God paid for us? Does our soul really have such a great value? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.

If we could save our souls with our own resources, I believe that millions would spend their fortune to save themselves. But the Bible says that all the world is not enough to save a soul, and all the earth's treasures are not enough. Is the soul so expensive that all the riches of the world cannot buy it? When I asked the value of a soul, someone answered: It was worth the death of Jesus. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that if we want to know the value of a soul, we should look to Gethsemane. But if a soul has so much value, why is it then that so many souls are lost?

In Johannesburg, South Africa, I visited some gold mines and one of them was more than 2 or 3 kilometers underground. Why do men invest so much effort to search for a precious metal? This brings a question to us, What sacrificial effort are we willing to make to save one soul? What

sacrifice have we made to save souls that are infinitely more valuable than gold? The Word of God says, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:12. Let us see more about the value of a soul:

In Luke 15:4-10 we read about two parables. In these parables are mentioned two classes of souls. The lost sheep is lost out of the house, and knows that he is lost. But he does not know what to do to come back. Sin dominates him so much that he has no possibility of coming back, and he needs someone to make an effort, to sacrifice, and to look for it until he is found.

In the parable it tells us that the shepherd brought the sheep together, counted them, and only one was missing. "I have 99 and should I now go out in the dark for only this one that is missing?"

Much value is attached to the lost sheep, and the shepherd decides to look for him. The Word of God does not tell us how much time the shepherd spent before he found the sheep, but when he found him, he carried him on his shoulders and rejoiced. This shows how much love he had for that one little sheep.

Now we have the parable of a lost coin. The woman lost one coin; she lost it inside the house, and she began to look for it. She lighted up the whole place and swept the floor until she found the lost coin. When she found it she was very happy and called her friends to rejoice with her because she found the coin that had been lost.

These two parables illustrate the

importance and value of a soul, and show the love we should manifest toward those who are lost. That shepherd who made such a great sacrifice did it because he loved the sheep. That woman would not have worked so hard if she had not loved that coin.

The same thing happens with you and me. I may think, Should I get up from my comfortable chair to look for a soul? Maybe after the Divine Service on Sabbaths, or might I rather have a long rest? If the good shepherd would have thought that way, then he could have lost that sheep and the poor creature would have perished.

Many years ago, in the coast of Scotland, a large ship collided with an iceberg. The collision tore up a big hole in the ship and water started to come in. All the crew and passengers were at risk of losing their lives. The ship blew the horn, asking for help. The vessel was not far from shore, and on the beach were fishermen, women, and children watching. They decided to help. Various small boats went out to save those who were ready to sink. The passengers on the deck of the big ship waited anxiously, hoping that the little boats could get to them soon. After some time of great concern, the little boats got closer to the big ship, and quickly loaded the passengers. The wind started to blow and form big waves. Some of the small boats, loaded with their living cargo, seemed to disappear under the big waves. Those on the beach waited anxiously for the souls at sea, wishing that all of them would be saved.

Finally, all the boats arrived ashore and none had sunk. The people on the beach hugged the survivors, and they did not even know them, but all were happy to know they were saved.

Suddenly they heard a voice announcing that someone had stayed behind in the big ship—the man who was trying to fix the hole and stop the water coming in so all could be saved. He had been forgotten! Now he was giving the "SOS" sign, pleading for help.

The waves were like mountains

of water by now, and the wind was blowing fiercely. One young man said to his mother:

"Mom, I will save that man."

"No, no, you cannot go and save that man! Your father already died, and your brother disappeared at sea eight years ago, and I have only you."

But he insisted, "I will save that man."

So he took the little boat and steered it toward the sinking ship. The attention of all on the beach was now turned to that young man who had braved the sea. Sometimes he would disappear amidst the waves and then again he would reappear. The big ship was now sinking faster and faster. Those on the beach were wondering if the young man would get there in time to save the sinking soul.

After much effort, he got closer to the big ship and was able to pick up the lone survivor. Those on the shore were relieved. Both men were rowing with all their might trying to get as far away as possible from the sinking ship. The powerful current of the heavy vessel was pulling them toward the deadly swirl. After great effort, and being now safely away, the doomed ship finally gave her last lurch towards the deep.

As they were approaching the shore and they could hear voices, the young man cried to his mother:

"Mom, Mom, I have found my brother William who was lost for eight years!"

He had never realized that he was saving his own brother, but his love for souls made him understand their value, so he had risked his own life to save that one man.

Christ did the same for us, for you and me. How about us? Do we have a love for souls? I was a "William" in the world, and someone came to preach the gospel to me and today I am preaching it to you. If we don't love souls, how can we save them?

Every true follower of God in the world is a soul-saver for Him. He wants us to preach the gospel to the millions of souls that are lost. ■



News from the Ukraine

by Valerie Riaboy

as told in Voineasa, Romania, September 16, 1995

Beloved brethren in the Lord: The greatest experience we all have is to be gathered here from all parts of the world. It is a great joy to be here together in Romania and also in our country, the Ukraine, because now we all enjoy freedom. Only in recent years have we been granted the privilege of preaching the gospel freely.

A short time ago, in one of our community centers in the Ukraine, we have gathered as many as we are here today (300). I would like to mention only one experience from the many we shared. Our sermon had just ended on the subject that the Lord loves the sinner, and regardless of how evil the sinner may have been, if he repents, God will forgive him. One man approached me and said:

"I would like to come to your house and talk privately." I gave him my address and said I would be expecting him.

At the appointed time he came to the house, I was waiting for him with my wife. The man greeted us and from under his jacket he pulled two knives and began to sharpen them. My wife was almost fainting out of fear, but he continued to sharpen the knives. I just followed him around the house, and he was praying and crying. I hugged him and asked:

"What happened?"

He said he needed to repent because he had been using those two knives to threaten peoples' lives and to get their money.

"From now on," he said, "I don't want to have anything more to do with this kind of life. Will God forgive me or not? I never killed anyone but I threatened them."

Praise God, through the transforming power of Christ, today this man attends our church regularly.

Another was a case of an even worse bandit. He came to me, explaining that in a Bible course we were offering, he had seen the subject of the 2300 days. He also asked permission to visit my home. He could not wait for the next conference to learn about the end of the world. He also had a shotgun with him. When I started to tell him what Jesus is doing in the heavenly sanctuary, I have never seen a person as moved with emotion as he was! He was just sobbing and sobbing. He is now coming to church regularly and he attended our Ploiesti general gathering, and when Brother Sas asked those who needed special prayer to come forward, he was one of them.

He had been one of the bank robbers in our country and had been in prison two times, but today, together with us he attends the church meetings and prays with us. He also writes poems for our magazine.

The prophet Jeremiah asked if the Ethiopian can change his skin. Man cannot, but the greatest and most wonderful experience that one can have is when God changes the tiger into a lamb.

We are very happy to enjoy the freedom to teach the Bible and see people converted. We would like you to help us by praying for our work. May God be praised! Recently in our area 280 people were baptized. This Field extends toward the Black Sea where more than 700 persons have been baptized since 1991. In my town we have 70 members, and there are 70 more who are interested in the message. We meet in a community center and we don't know how long this freedom will last. May the Lord help us. ■



Laboring in Central Asia

by D. Suresh Kumar

as told in Voinesa, Romania, on September 16, 1995

Once again I want to wish you the blessings of God!

This is an experience about how we entered a new place called Nagaland. It was a rather challenging field of labor because we could not speak the language, the weather was cold six months out of the year, and the rest of the time, it rained every day. These factors made our work rather difficult.

On our second day there, we received a visitor in our home. He was a minister and he asked us:

"Don't you know that no other religion can come here except Methodist and Presbyterian?"

"No, we don't know," we told him.

"Now you know, no other denomination can come to this area."

"We are assigned to be here," we told him.

"But we tell you that you can't be here."

"We will wait and see what happens," we said.

"Remember my final words, that you cannot stay here."

The next day we received another visitor with the same warning. "If you came for preaching, you cannot stay here."

When a new visitor came to the area, it was customary to go and register in the municipality or main office of the place and state the purpose of the visit. We explained to them that we had been assigned to this place and could not go back, and they were not happy. Many more people came and ordered us out.

One day when we were having our prayer, one man came rushing into our home. "You can't stay here anymore," he said, and he had a gun. He told my wife that I did not have faith. "Go with him and be gone." We

were still praying. The man left and the day passed and we did not give up our work.

We moved to a different location and it was a difficult task. Gradually we found places where we could work. We were able to find some interested people, not because of the truth, but out of sympathy for the threats we had received. They said: "Don't worry, we will take care of you. We will help you." There were only two or three families who tried to help us and the authorities knew that.

We planned to open a school to promote the work, and we began to do so. One day I was at the small office of the school and I saw a man coming toward me. I heard my wife scream my name. She yelled, "Dad!" I looked to see why she had screamed, and I could not understand why. The man came straight to my office and began to talk to me casually. When people began to come around, then he ran out of my office, and my wife saw a pistol and a knife on the other side which he had concealed with a shawl, but when he moved fast, it could be seen. Now there were people coming from everywhere and when he saw all the people, he walked to my office again. When the people came closer, my wife said he was going to kill me, and tried to appeal to him, asking, "Why would you want to do such a thing?"

The man looked straight into my face and did not say anything. I did not want the people to harm the man, so I did not press charges.

The next day, this same man came to my house and after greeting me, he asked:

"Why didn't you disclose to the others that I came to attack you?" I did not know.

"Why didn't your wife press charges against me?" He wept and repented, and as a result, he became the first person to join our work.

A few days later in April, it was raining continuously. We had a program to attend and there was no way for a car to go through, so we had to walk uphill. As we went out the people said:

"You should not go out today."

"Why?" we asked.

"The weather is not good," they said. But we looked at the sky and it was clear. After we walked about a kilometer and a half, it began to get dark.

We started to worry as we observed how the animals began to crawl away and hide themselves. So we tried to go back, but immediately it started to rain and hail. The hail was falling as big chunks of ice. We were covering our heads and we could not run uphill, yet we could not stay there either. My wife was expecting a baby, and she could not run very well. She sought shelter under a tree, but we could not stay there either. I pulled her away, and as soon as we left that spot, the tree fell down!

We could not walk up or down. There were some kindhearted people who saw what was happening and they came to help us. They took us to their house and brought us dry clothes.

The storm lasted for two hours, and when we finally could go back home, we arrived at our address, but there was no house! It was completely gone! Our house had been destroyed by the storm. Of all the things we had left there, nothing had remained. We had to find a new place to live, and also look for some people that could help us.

The next day we started to look for a house. That was the turning point in our experience in Nagaland; the people helped us out of sympathy. More interested souls began to come for Bible studies. The tithe started to come in, and God led the work forward and provided a place for us. From that time on, no one came anymore to threaten us and we now have a wonderful work there. To God be the glory.



The Everlasting Gospel in Angola

by Jorai Pereira da Cruz

as told in Voineasa, Romania, September 16, 1995

I thank God for the privilege that the Lord has given me to be here at this 17th General Conference Session. I bring greetings from Angola. "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." Romans 16:27.

Angola is a country in southwest Africa, and until 1975, it was a Portuguese colony. From 1975 to 1990 it was a communist country. For more than 30 years Angola has been involved in war; 15 years they fought the Portuguese leaders, and for over 20 years, they have been involved in a civil war. Consequently, a lot of death and destruction have occurred.

Our church has also suffered from this woe, and it is a very poor church. During the time that Angola was a colony, the large SDA Church grew to about 100,000 members. The Reform Movement came into existence there because many faithful SDAs would not consent to go to war. We visited the country in 1990 and there was already a group of believers—sympathizers of the Reform Movement. We visited the country more than five times after that. Bro. Joao Batista came especially from Brazil and stayed for one year, and today we have a mission recognized by the General Conference. In this mission we have one minister, eight Bible workers, and 300 baptized members. The message has extended from the northern to the southern part of the country.


This year we spent two months in

Angola, and more than 250 souls were present at our conference. Our brethren have made many experiences. We have many brethren who have suffered for the truth, and I want to mention here a case of one of our leaders in the country, who, together with his family, was taken prisoner by a rebellious political group. They wanted to force him to take up arms and defend the group. He rejected this demand because of his conscience. Then they made him take off his clothes and he received 120 lashes. He told us the greatest suffering was when they took his wife and small children and subjected them to the same ordeal. Being a prisoner, he could not do anything to protect them. They all received 120 lashes. Thanks to God he remained firm.

During my last trip, I made an experience when I visited a very poor region. We were taking money to buy a property where we could hold our meetings and also have living quarters for the worker. The bandits knew we were carrying money, and during the night, they went to the house where we were lodging. This house did not have a proper roof, and after midnight, we heard people walking around the house. Then they began throwing rocks on the "so-called" roof so we would come out of the house. We all awoke to the sound of gunshots. The only thing we could do was to pray to the Lord, and He answered us. After the bandits had

fired a few shots, approximately 200-300 meters away was heard the sound of machine guns. When the bandits heard the machine gun fire, they ran away. We waited about 15 minutes until all was quiet. Then we walked out and they were all gone. We came inside and thanked the Lord because He had fulfilled His promise for His angels to encamp around His children and deliver them.

During the following weeks, while we were traveling, five soldiers entered the bus we were on. They were carrying machine guns, knives, grenades, and as they were talking amongst themselves, the driver noticed that they were of the rebel group called Unitas. When the bus was passing in front of some government barracks, he tried to drive the bus inside that compound. The rebel soldiers quickly stood up in the bus, one took the machine gun and loaded it; another got the grenade and the other the knife and ordered the driver to stop the bus. We were seated in the middle rows of the bus. They threatened the bus driver and told him if he would not stop the bus they would blow it up. The soldier with the machine gun was in the back of the bus and the one with the grenade moved to the front. As the driver did not open the door, one of the soldiers kicked the door open, and his group got out. They stopped the first car approaching, jumped in, and sped away. Again the Lord delivered us.

Despite all the problems suffered in Angola, our people are very enthusiastic, and they solicit the prayers of all our brethren around the world, that they may be able to endure the trials they are undergoing. Soon we plan to return to that country, and I would like to take the greetings from all here to the brethren there. Please pray for our brethren in Angola. 

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