

"March 27th, 1960"

by Stephen L. Overstreet

Regional Director of Development (N. Calif. and Nevada)

"Esta es KGEI en San Francisco, California, Estados Unidos de America, comenzando aqui su transmision en Idioma Espanol para latinoamerica. Estamos operando en la frecuencia de 15280 KHZ en la bando internacional de 19 metros."

Every day since March 27, 1960, the Far East Broadcasting Company has permeated the airwaves with a language quite different from those spoken throughout its primary target areas in Asia. For 25 years, broadcasts in the Spanish language have been going out to millions of people in Latin America from FEBC's international shortwave station KGEI near San Francisco, California.

Once called a "Miracle Station" because of the way God brought this station into the FEBC family, KGEI's beginnings had a much different purpose.

In the late 1930's, with international radio being a new and intriguing enterprise, the General Electric Corporation built its first shortwave transmitter. By today's standards it was a relatively small shortwave transmitter—35 kilowatts. As a rare piece of equipment, it was built for the General Electric exhibition of the 1939 World's Fair held on Treasure Island in the middle of the San Francisco Bay.

Known as General Electric's "Showcase Station," it first went "on-the-air" in February of 1939 under the call sign W6XBE. A few months later power was raised to its present 50 kilowatts and the call sign was changed to KGEI.

In June of 1941, after the World's Fair, General Electric moved the new shortwave transmitter to its present location on the salt flats of Redwood City, California.

Then KGEI answered the patriotic appeal of wartime years and became the "Voice of Freedom." Although still owned by General Electric, KGEI was being operated by the United States Office of War Information for the purpose of keeping our servicemen overseas aware of news at home and around the world.

It was during this time that General Douglas MacArthur transmitted his famous message telling the people of the Philippines: "I SHALL RETURN!" That broadcast was aired over KGEI.

Several years after the war, ownership

of KGEI changed and so did her purpose! This time it was a commercial venture to Latin America. However, God had other plans, and it wasn't long before the venture failed.

"Sell" was the only alternative KGEI's owners could find, and so in 1959, the Far East Broadcasting Company was contacted.

FEBC was definitely interested, but "broke!" Two other projects were facing us, and we just couldn't see how God was going to provide the \$27,000 down payment requested by KGEI's owners. Besides that, the owner needed an answer in 24 hours. So our FEBC staff prayed:

"Lord, if you want us to purchase KGEI and expand our ministry to the people of Latin America, provide us with \$27,000 in the next 24 hours. And let us know that this is

all within your perfect plan!"

It was a very simple, unsophisticated prayer, but the gates of Heaven must have experienced a mighty shaking that day, because within 19 hours a total of \$27,000 came in from three unexpected sources! And with the \$27,000 also came the overwhelming peace of God which said, "This is the way, walk ye in it!"

From the "Showcase Station" and "Voice of Freedom" to "a commercial venture," KGEI's new purpose became to reach the vast listening audience in Latin America with the Good News of forgiveness in Christ. On March 27, 1960, KGEI went on-the-air as a new FEBC station, bringing hope to thousands. Now called the "Voice of Friendship," KGEI proclaims daily that Jesus Christ is the best Friend a person could ever have! ☩



International Shortwave Broadcasting Station KGEI at Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, while under ownership of G.E.

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