

# From the G.C. President

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**O MONDAY MORNING** Pastor A.C. McClure and I were among a group of religious leaders invited to have breakfast with President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore at the White House. After meeting briefly with each guest, the President invited religious organizations to help address some specific needs in American society and then engaged in a dialogue with the group regarding certain elements of these initiatives.

**O THE BANKING OFFICIAL** in Sri Lanka, was telling an acquaintance about the (Net '96) evangelistic meetings he attended during a visit to California. According to the E-mail report I received last Friday from Colombo, the banking official was so impressed he secured a set of the tapes and arranged to show them to his colleagues. Imagine his surprise, when he asked his acquaintance if he was aware of any Seventh-day Adventists in Colombo, to discover he was a member of the Union Executive Committee! After a pause, he asked one question: With such a great message, why weren't you Adventists proclaiming it to the world?

**O ON A PERSONAL NOTE:** I did not anticipate the blessing which awaited me in the plainly-wrapped little package I received last week from Alden Thompson, professor of Biblical Studies at Walla Walla College. His note, tucked inside the cover of the little book (*A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas R. Kelly, Harper Collins) contained in the package, accurately promised a "touch of Quaker soul food for the new year." Here are just a few gems.

"Meister Eckhart wrote, 'There are plenty to follow our Lord halfway, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends and honors, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves.' It is just this astonishing life that is willing to follow Him the other half, sincerely to disown itself, this life that intends complete obedience, without any reservations, that I would propose to you in all humility, in all boldness, in all seriousness. I mean this literally, utterly, completely, and I mean it for you and for me—commit your lives in unreserved obedience to Him.

"If you don't realize the revolutionary explosiveness of this proposal you don't understand what I mean. This is something wholly different from mild, conventional religion that, with respectable skirts held back by dainty fingers, anxiously tries to fish the world out of the mud hole of its own selfishness. Our churches, ... are full of such respectable and amiable people. ... In some, says William James, religion exists as a dull habit, in others as an acute fever. Religion as a dull habit is not that for which Christ lived and died" (pp 24-25).

"Boldly must we risk the dangers that lie along the margins of excess, if we would live the life of the second half. For the life of obedience is a holy life, a separated life, a renounced life, cut off from worldly compromises, distinct, heaven-dedicated in the midst of other people, stainless as the snows upon the mountaintops.

"They who walk in obedience, following God the second half, living the life of inner prayer of submission and exultation, on them God's holiness takes hold as a mastering passion of life." "...The Cross as dogma is painless speculation; the Cross as lived suffering is anguish and glory "

(pp 32-35).

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #49:** In previous segments we have noted many remarkable predictions made by Ellen White that covered events in the political, social, economic and religious worlds. Her predictive ministry, however, embraced wider dimensions, including such areas as health, science and the environment.

What has amazed thoughtful people through the years is that Ellen White's general comments on health, for example, have borne the weight of the years—something that probably cannot be said about any other writer in the 19th century. That in itself is a remarkable achievement. More than that, her writings contain certain principles and developments that were not common in her day but today are well-validated.

For example, note her emphasis on the psychosomatic elements of sickness: "That which brings sickness of body and mind to nearly all, is dissatisfied feelings and discontented repinings" (1T:566). "A great deal of the sickness which afflicts humanity has its origin in the mind, and can only be cured by restoring the mind to health" (3T:184; see also MH:24).

While ancient medical science attested that minds and bodies cannot be separated, until recently this truth had little effect on the practice of medicine. Norman Cousins helped to open this door: "The pathways along which the human mind makes its registrations on physiology are being probed more deeply than ever before. A biology of the emotions is coming into view. ... These facts fit in with the last article written by the late Franz Ingelfinger as editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, in which physicians were reminded that 85 percent of human illnesses are within the reach of the body's own healing system." (Norman Cousins, *Head First: The Biology of Hope*, New York: E. P. Norton, 1989, p. 38).

In 1995, *Healing and The Mind*, a remarkable book based on the television series with the same title, was devoted to two important questions: "How do thoughts and feelings influence health? How is healing related to the mind?" Bill Moyers and his team directed these questions to physicians in large public hospitals and small community clinics, in stress reduction clinics and therapeutic support groups, and with scientists on the frontier of mind/body research. Their answers were remarkably consistent: the mind has a direct effect on the body—for good or ill. Moyers concluded that "talking with different doctors during this journey, I realize that we do need a new medical paradigm that goes beyond 'body parts' medicine, and not only for the patient's sake. At a time when the cost of health care is skyrocketing, the potential economic impact of mind/body medicine is considerable" (*Healing and The Mind*, New York: Doubleday, 1995, p 5). Yet again we thank God for the remarkable woman He called to guide this movement.