

# From the G.C. President

May 12, 1997

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**O SOWETO EVANGELISM:** The administrative leadership of both Eastern Africa Division and Africa-Indian Ocean Division look forward with anticipation to the approval and support of their division committees to participate in the evangelistic campaign scheduled to be conducted by Jamaican lay-evangelist, Fitz-Henry, in Soweto, Republic of South Africa, in February 1998. Though funding for the effort and its satellite distribution is not yet available, we are proceeding confident the Lord will provide the US\$500,000 cost for the effort and satellite-distribution and thrilled to think of the millions on the continent of Africa who could hear these messages. We are also giving study to transmitting the signal westward across the Atlantic to Brazil where Spanish could be added to the English, Portuguese, Swahili (and many other African languages) and received in the South, Inter- and most of the North American Divisions. Other exciting ideas are under consideration, but will be reported as they develop. Please pray earnestly that the Lord will touch the hearts of His people around the world to make this a reality.

**O MINISTRY MAGAZINE** was prominently featured at the recent International Congress on Preaching at Westminster Chapel, London. According to Nikolas Satelmajer and Peter Roennfeldt (from the General Conference and Trans-European Division Ministerial Associations, respectively), many of the 500 clergy in attendance expressed appreciation for the magazines they have received over the years. Over 70,000 clergy from many denominations around the world receive complimentary copies of *Ministry* every second month.

**O MISSION COLLEGE OF EVANGELISM GRADUATES FIRST CLASS:** Forty students, from the United States and abroad, arrived in Rapid City, South Dakota, last February to begin a three-month program to help them learn to lead souls to Christ. The first class included a professor from the University of Guam who wanted to learn how to more effectively witness to her students. Another, an engineer, left a lucrative position to commit his life more fully to the work of God. Fifty attended services on the first Sabbath, and by the third Sabbath attendance increased to 100. Most students attended the full three-month program while a few attended a three-week seminar.

Part of the training included a field school of evangelism which led to the planting of our first church in Rapid City. Nevada-Utah Conference president, Larry Caviness, wrote to program director, Louis Torres, the Hispanic coordinator for Net '96, and currently working with *Amazing Facts*, "Sending our lay person to your three-week training is one of the best investments we have made. In one year his 10-member church has grown to 25 members. He has 35 Bible studies going and four of those were recently baptized."

**O IMPACT IN LESOTHO:** Using a tent provided through Global Mission funds, this year evangelist Andrew Keshwa established two new companies of Adventist believers as a result of two campaigns in unentered areas of Lesotho, Africa. He is currently finishing his third campaign and will begin his fourth in October. During the winter months (May to September), Keshwa will concentrate on nurturing and strengthening these recently established groups of believers.

**O ON A PERSONAL NOTE:** I'm writing this edition of "From the G.C. President" during the trans-Pacific portion of my return from this current trip to Southern Asia and the Peoples

Republic of China. On Tuesday morning, Pastors N.C. Wilson, L.C. Cooper and I will report to the General Conference Executive Committee the findings about which I reported in last week's edition regarding the health of Dr. M.E. Cherian. Should the recommendation be accepted for a change in the leadership in that division. On Tuesday afternoon, I will return to New Delhi for a Thursday afternoon meeting with the Southern Asia Division Committee, followed by a meeting of the General Conference Committee (held by means of video and audio teleconferencing), to make a decision regarding future leadership of that division. Please continue to pray for Dr. Cherian's continuing recovery.

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #63:** In our last two segments we noted that one's attitude (John 7:17) affects one's understanding of the Bible or the writings of Ellen White. We misuse both when we read them as if they were merely the opinions of the writers, or with an "unChristlike spirit."

**Verbal or Thought Inspiration.** We further abuse the Bible and Ellen White's writings when we misunderstand how God speaks to human beings through His prophets. For some, it seems easier to believe that God dictated the words that the prophet faithfully recorded. For them, this method would avoid mistakes by eliminating human error.

For others, this dictation method not only ignores reality, it opens the door unnecessarily to problems that bring confusion and focuses on the container rather than the content of God's messages. Those who believe in thought inspiration emphasize that God meets His people where they are and patiently leads them along, unfolding truths that are always in harmony with previously given truths.

Ellen White identifies with those who accept the concept of thought inspiration rather than verbal inspiration. She recognized that "the writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. ... The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. ... Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. ... The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. ... Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. ... The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God" (ISM: pp. 19-21).

In our next segment, we will look more closely at the wide diversity of mental and spiritual endowments represented in Bible writers through whom God's thoughts were conveyed.