

From the G.C. President

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O ATTENTION PLEASE: It occurred to me, while writing the next segment (during a visit to our first granddaughter—born last Tuesday), to encourage you to distribute this news sheet as widely as possible, including placing it in your church bulletin and/or on your church/school bulletin board. Maybe a child's future will be affected by sharing this edition.

O CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES: International Children's Care (ICC) was established to provide homes for orphaned and abandoned children and has filled this need, in part, by creating Country Villages in areas of need around the world. These Villages consist of at least 10 homes, each one providing room for 10 to 12 children, cared for in a family environment by national house parents. In some instances children can be part of ICC's international adoption program. At this time there are children, who have been freed for adoption, and are waiting for loving, Christian homes. Families, who are interested should call the ICC office in Vancouver, Washington, 360-573-0429 or write for an adoption packet, including \$5, to International Children's Care, P.O. Box 4406, Vancouver, WA, 98662.

O MONGOLIAN UPDATE: ✓ Pastor Gerald and Mrs. Birol Christo, (retired former president of the Southern Asia Division) have been in Mongolia for just over five weeks to help develop the fledgling work in this challenging area. Last week 20 non-Adventist mothers attended a parenting seminar taught by the Christos, and Mrs. Birol Christo has begun a singing class in a public school. "We were happy when two girls brought their mothers to our meeting last week," Pastor Christo says. We are now meeting in a rented hall. But with only a handful of believers, we need to find the money to purchase a permanent facility. Please pray for the Christos as they bring hope to the people of Mongolia.

✓ **Homes, hospitals and schools made of straw?** Yes. ADRA is building schools, hospitals and social service buildings made of straw in more than one-third of the settlements in Mongolia. The project is the direct result of ADRA's pioneering efforts to introduce the technique of using straw bales for construction purposes, resulting in an inexpensive, super-insulated (R-60 thermal factor) building that is projected to last 100 years or more.

ADRA-Mongolia identified the cost of energy as a prime factor contributing to poverty. Construction during the socialist era depended on centralized coal-fired boilers for heat and used little insulation. When subsidies disappeared, Mongolia's operating costs skyrocketed and the social service infrastructure began to fall apart. Because Mongolia experiences severe winters, hospitals, schools and families spend 70 percent of their income on coal or wood for heating fuel.

To find a solution, ADRA (funded by ADRA-Canada) built demonstration straw-bale houses and institutional buildings which reduced fuel burned by 90 percent and saved 50 percent in construction costs. "The nicest thing about this project is that ADRA has a chance to be a catalyst. We're introducing technology that is unique, almost odd, which makes us stand out among other organizations," says ADRA-Mongolia

director, Scott Christiansen.

Air-borne pollution will decrease due to a 90 percent drop in fuel burned, maternal and child health indicators will improve as a result of increased health services, and drop-out rates in schools will decrease since winter temperatures in schools can be kept above freezing.

Straw-bale construction is relatively simple. The straw buildings are post-and-beam design with straw used as a non-structural infill. Straw bales are laid on a cement foundation and are stacked like bricks, with wooden stakes driven through the courses of bales to stabilize them. When the walls are complete, they are covered with a wire mesh and plastered with a cement stucco 2-3 cm thick. Once the stucco is applied, the buildings are virtually fire and insect proof and are expected to last 100 years or more. It is also anticipated that more straw-bale projects will be implemented.

Off the Back Burner

Segment #69: Another way that the Bible and Ellen White have been abused and misused occurs when one uses the term "degrees of inspiration." This point is somewhat different than separating the sacred from the secular.

Mrs. White makes no distinction regarding the inspiration in her books, articles, or her letters when they are giving spiritual counsel. This eliminates the position some have held that only her books are inspired. Those taking that position forget that most of her books were first written in article form.

Further, Bible writers "mixed" extra-Biblical sources with their vision-based messages. But one cannot dismiss a prophet's work simply because some portion of the book contains material from sources other than direct divine revelation. If prophets utilize the writings of others to better express their thoughts, that material is not to be understood as merely "common"—as we have been using the term.

The term, "degrees of inspiration" is used when an attempt is made to distinguish between Biblical writers and other prophets. But, at least eight prophets mentioned in the Bible were directly inspired and wrote for their times although their works were not included in the Biblical canon. The Biblical story not only does not hint of any difference in the quality of their inspiration, it describes their work as of equal authority with the canonical prophets. We find no difference between canonical and noncanonical prophets in how they received their messages, nor in how they communicated them, nor in how their contemporaries responded to them. Noncanonical literary prophets spoke for God and were regarded as God's spokesmen by their contemporaries.

With the suggestion that some prophets were granted a higher degree of inspiration/revelation than other prophets comes the inescapable question: Who will decide? Does God authorize an uninspired person to sit in judgment on a prophet's work and decide whether he or she is a first-, second-, or third-degree prophet? Of course not.