

# From the G.C. President

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**O ASI CONVENTION:** “Celebrating 50 years as Marketplace Ministers” was the theme of the ASI convention, which took place at Albuquerque, New Mexico’s beautiful convention center August 6-9. ASI, which was established by action of the General Conference Executive Committee in 1947, conducts annual conventions designed to both highlight and encourage personal witnessing in the life of each believer. These conventions provide a forum for dedicated business men and women, professionals and many supportive ministries to share stories, inspiration, ideas and financial support. In fact, the 1,200 attendees of the ‘97 convention set a new record when on Sabbath, August 9, they gave in cash and pledges \$1.7 million for a significant list of initiatives around the globe. ASI elected Dan Houghton, president of Hart Research, to head its new leadership. Further information and pictorial highlights of the convention may be found on the World Wide Web (<http://www.adventist.org/gc/presidential/>).

**O 200 MILLION TELEVISION VIEWERS SEE “A CLOUD OVER CHINA,”** the series of 8-minute television health programs produced by *It Is Written*. According to a report received by Pastor Finley, the series has been shown four times, most recently three times a day during the news program.

**O BEWARE!** I’ve recently received messages indicating some individuals were upset at the church when they discovered that the ministry, institution, organization to which they had donated sizeable sums of money was less scrupulous or supportive of the church than they had pretended to be. It seems the donors expected the General Conference to publish lists of organizations which failed to reach a particular standard. Such an expectation is, of course, unreasonable. While members can legitimately expect that congregations, organizations, or institutions which are accountable to church constituencies will operate in harmony with denominational policies, they must not assume that independent ministries (independent from accountability to church constituencies) operate within these same guidelines. It is the responsibility of those who financially support these organizations to secure such information as they consider necessary prior to making a decision. Please don’t depend on unfounded assumptions.

**O THE GROWTH OF THE “VOICE OF HOPE RADIO CLUB,”** (designed to interact with AWR’s Arabic-speaking listeners) launched by the Adventist Media Center in Cyprus last year has been astonishing. Membership is increasing each quarter (causing some strain on AWR’s postage budget). The June issue of their quarterly Club magazine was sent to a record number

of 1,586 members (a 20% increase).

Several self-appointed Radio Club Representatives, fans of AWR, have organized clubs, encouraged their friends to join, and even printed stationery. One recently wrote from Egypt, “Greetings of love and peace from the Lord of peace. Peace which no one can take away. I truly thank God who made it possible to know ‘Sawt el Rajaa’ (the Voice of Hope). It meant a great deal for me to receive your messages and to accept me as your friend. In this short period of time, I was able to form a small club of my close friends who listen to ‘Sawt el Rajaa.’ So far this club has around 25 members and more will be joining...”

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #76:** In our last segment we noted how Jewish leaders in Christ’s day found “reasons” to deny the resurrection of Lazarus and Christ’s own divine credentials. Men and women in every age faced the same questions that Jewish leaders in Christ’s day had to resolve. In the face of light, even in the presence of God Himself in Jesus, the question of belief is more than a matter of scientific evidence—such as a resurrected Lazarus or of Christ Himself!

When Jesus gave His best answers and provided the clearest demonstration of truth, people still rejected Him. Why? The answer lies in a person’s will to believe (John 7:17), in that secret, hidden mystery the Bible calls “faith.” Belief in God requires submission to His sovereignty, and that goes against the worship of self. Thus sinful nature rejects that which limits self-supremacy. It is only faith which responds to divine love that will not be coerced by self-love, and is capable of accepting even “overwhelming” evidence.

Thus Ellen G. White could say, “perfect assurance . . . is not compatible with faith. Faith rests not on certainty, but upon evidence. Demonstration is not faith.” (To O. A. Olsen, Sept. 1, 1892, cited in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 1029, 1030.)

Probably it has never been said better than when Ellen G. White commented on an exchange Jesus had with religious leaders after He stated that any person who wills to know, shall know the truth (John 7:17): “The perception and appreciation of truth, He said, depends less upon the mind than upon the heart. Truth must be received into the soul; it claims the homage of the will. If truth could be submitted to the reason alone, pride would be no hindrance in the way of its reception. But it is to be received through the work of grace in the heart; and its reception depends upon the renunciation of every sin that the Spirit of God reveals.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 455; see *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 301.)

When God asks us to “reason” with Him, reason

must understand that “reason” must listen to revealed truth with a “heart” that has renounced “every sin that the Spirit of God reveals.” Reason must always be subject to the Lord of Truth, if the reasoner expects to understand truth.