

# From the G.C. President

September 8, 1997

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**O DATELINE LA SIERRA:** Over seven hundred retired church employees gathered at La Sierra University last weekend to attend their annual convention. Though time takes its toll, the interest in the progress and plans of God's cause, commitment to our message and mission, and affection with those who have borne the heat of battle together remains undiminished. I was blessed worshiping with them last Sabbath, listening as they shared their zeal, vision and questions, and watching as hugs rekindled half-century-long (plus) friendships. Internet report at:

<http://www.adventist.com/gc/presidential/>

**O BREATH OF LIFE:** History was made Sunday night as Pastor C.D. Brooks formally introduced Pastor Walter L. Pearson, Jr. as director/speaker of the Breath of Life television ministry at the taping of the first programs that will feature Pastor Pearson on the broadcast. Pastor Brooks was the first speaker for Breath of Life and served the church for 23 years in that capacity, also serving as a general field secretary for the General Conference during that time. The taping this week is being held in the historic Bright Hope Baptist Church and is the first of three weeks of taping scheduled for this fall. Further taping will be in Washington, DC, from October 4-10 (in the General Conference auditorium), and Atlanta, GA from October 26-30. TV programs from these tapings will air after the first of the year. Breath of Life may be seen on the BET cable network.

**O RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN RUSSIA:** The prospects for a new bill on church-state relations which would protect religious freedom and respect Russia's own constitution now seem dimmer than at any point since mid-July. The bill that is under consideration by the Duma has Seventh-day Adventist leaders, along with representatives of other religious organizations, actively participating in attempts to soften certain of its particularly glaring provisions. Supporters of the parliament's bill which Yeltsin vetoed in July have become more militant and, in spite of internal dialogue and international pressures some elements of newer drafts of the bill are harsher than the one previously approved and vetoed. Please pray that heaven will keep the doors of opportunity open for gospel proclamation in this country.

**O GLOBAL MISSION PENETRATES SRI LANKA:** Prior to 1990 there were only 26 congregations in the island-nation of Sri Lanka. Since then, driven by the vision of Global Mission, the Sri Lanka Mission has established 18 new congregations—of which five were made up primarily of ex-Buddhists. "We have established churches and new groups in places we only dreamed of before," says Pastor J.

Gnanasekeran, Sri Lanka Global Mission co-ordinator (incidentally, Pastor Gnanasekeran's grandfather, James Storer Thambipillai, was the first Seventh-day Adventist convert in Sri Lanka). You can read more about the exciting progress in Sri Lanka in the latest edition of Global Mission's *FrontLine* newsletter. (Receive *FrontLine* free. Write: Global Mission, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring MD 20904, or fax (301) 680-6625, (or from the US phone 1-800-648-5824).

## Off the Back Burner

**SEGMENT #79:** "How can a man or woman get right before his God?" (See Job 9:2) This is probably history's oldest question. Ancient Babylonians and Egyptians asked it and we note their many efforts to seek peace with their gods. Greek philosophers created gods who embodied the passions of the human heart. Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and other world religions worship their own concepts of Deity; in the process they each have their human "ways of salvation."

Christianity strangely has presented the world with various concepts of God, at times borrowing certain elements of non-Christian religions. How to please such concepts of God have led many, on hands and knees, to climb stone steps in Rome; or to shut themselves away from the society in a world of monastic silence; or desert monasteries or to claim His name without the change in character that inevitably results from salvation in, fellowship with, and submission to God.

For reasons that go deep into human motivation, human beings want a god who promises salvation and life everlasting without altering their character—assurance without change. Historically, satisfying human conceptions of God has led either to remarkable philosophical excursions (to satisfy the appeal to reason) or to phenomenal emotional experiences (to satisfy the appeal to feeling).

But the age-old tug between those who seek "to get right with God" through reason or feeling will continue until one listens to God Himself answer the question. In His answer, as unfolded in the Bible and especially in the life and death of Jesus, we discover the real issues behind all human attempts to "get right with God."

In one small book, *Steps to Christ*, we read the answer to humanity's oldest question as framed within the Great Controversy—a conflict that has existed since time before the creation of this world. In these next few segments our excursion will address the issues which are at stake whenever a man or woman asks, *How can I get right with God?*