

# From the G.C. President

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**OPentecost '98 Delayed:** Just a few days ago the staff of the Adventist Global Communication Network made the decision to delay the beginning of Pentecost '98 from February 28 to April 25. As many of you already know, Pentecost '98 is the first satellite evangelistic series attempted on the continent of Africa. The featured speaker for this series is Fitz Henry, the stirring lay-evangelist from Jamaica. Brother Henry's messages will be broadcast from the campus of Vista University in Soweto, South Africa from April 25 to May 30, 1998. Recent large orders for satellite equipment from churches across the continent caused this delay. Choosing to wait a few more weeks means that literally hundreds of other churches will be equipped to participate in these historic meetings. Although this was a difficult decision to make, I applaud the AGCN staff for listening to the issues that can "make or break" a project of this magnitude. This sensitive approach will allow many more people to be touched by the Holy Spirit.

**Global Mission Issues Committee:** During the days of January 13-15 the Global Mission Issues Committee convened. I consider this meeting to be one of the more significant gatherings the World Headquarters will host this year. Many questions about the way the Adventist Church presents the gospel to the non-Christian world were thoughtfully and prayerfully discussed. As we look to the future of Global Mission, we must constantly ask ourselves the following questions: How do we develop a strategy of sensitivity and at the same time assertively evangelize? And, how do we most effectively meet the needs of those we minister to in their cultures? It is important to remember that we have an incredible message of love and hope to share with the world. Our challenge is to constantly evaluate how effective and complete our communication of that message really is.

**New Officers for the Columbia Union:** I want to take this opportunity to wish God blessings on Pastors Harold Lee and Edward Motschieder. Harold, most recently the Union's secretary, was elected president of the Columbia Union in the North American Division. He is replacing Pastor Ralph Martin, who recently retired. And Ed, Ohio Conference president, has been elected new secretary of the Columbia Union. May God bless each of these servants to be sensitive and effective communicators for Him.

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment 97:** We have been letting *Steps To Christ* unfold the Great Controversy Theme, especially in regard to why Jesus returned to heaven in His human form and what this teaches the universe about how God deals with sin. In our last segment we focused on what angels see when they observe Jesus "bearing our human form before the Father's throne" (SC:14). But what should WE "see" when we view Jesus fulfilling His twin assignments as Sacrifice and Mediator?

From the human point of view we see a living color illustration of the profound observation: "The Spirit was to be given as a

regenerating agent [Christ's representative on earth], and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer" (DA:671). No wonder Satan hates the twin roles of Christ's work as our "atoning sacrifice" and "all-powerful mediator" (GC:488). He will do anything to keep these two roles apart--and he has been very successful. The divisions in the Christian church lie along this fault line: various groups focus primarily on what Jesus did at Calvary, while others focus primarily on the work of the Holy Spirit. To put it another way, we see this splitting of the truth when some emphasize the objective atonement and minimize the restorative work of the Holy Spirit. Or when some focus on the subjectivity of human autonomy (reason, feeling, historical research, intuition, etc.) while minimizing the purpose of Christ's life and death (the objective atonement).

Satan is not displeased if church members emphasize the sacrificial atonement if the benefits of what Christ has done FOR US are not appropriated BY men and women, to be effective IN and THROUGH men and women by means of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit (see SC:63).

When we pray, we should "see" our Saviour at the heart of the universe with God the Father--who feels the same about us as Jesus does, and always has! As High Priest, Jesus is our Mediator/Intercessor. His powerful arm reaches out to all who have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. In addition to His presence in heaven as the One who has satisfied "justice" and made possible our "acceptance" with a holy God, He has won the right to intercede in the lives of His followers. He breaks through the power with which Satan has held them captive, developing within His faithful followers a strengthened will to resist sinful tendencies.

This kind of intercession men and women need now, daily, and until Jesus returns: "Everyone who will break from the slavery and service of Satan, and will stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel will be kept by Christ's intercessions. Christ, as our Mediator, at the right hand of the Father, ever keeps us in view, for it is as necessary that He should keep us by His intercessions as that He should redeem us with His blood. If He lets go His hold of us for one moment, Satan stands ready to destroy. Those purchased by His blood, He now keeps by His intercession" (6BC:1078).

This double role, as Sacrifice and Mediator/Intercessor, focuses on the heart of the Great Controversy. God will eradicate sin from the universe, not by declaring it eradicated or only by expunging everyone's record with a mighty sweep of mercy. The only way for sin to be destroyed and for the universe once again to be secure against rebellion is for the rebel to become a loyal son or daughter of God, willingly and habitually. As our Surety, Jesus is our guarantee that the gospel plan will work; as our Intercessor, working through the Holy Spirit, He will help us to work that plan.