

# From the G.C. President

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■ **Milestone in Toledo:** Last Sabbath, March 14, the Ohio Conference and the Columbia Union, with the support of the Ellen White Estate, sponsored the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the great controversy vision. Ceremonies were held at the Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church, located just 20 miles north of the spot where the vision was given. The most significant of Ellen White's estimated 2,000 visions took place on March 14, 1858 at Lovett's Grove (now Bowling Green), Ohio on a Sunday afternoon during a funeral conducted by James White. This two-hour vision became the basis for the 219-page book, *Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1*, which recorded in abbreviated form the details of this far-ranging vision. Later, this book was expanded into the five-volume, 3,603-page set of books known today as the *Conflict of the Ages Series*. What is the significance of this vision for us today? I would like to suggest a three-fold answer to this question. This vision helps us to:

- 1) See the invisible world as it really is.
- 2) Understand the reason sin exists in this world.
- 3) See where we, as individuals, fit into the Great Controversy.

During these ceremonies I was once again struck by the importance of our Adventist heritage. Understanding the realities of our history as a religious movement will only benefit us as we mature and grow into a new millennium together.

Many thanks to Pastor C.J. Yoon and the members of the Toledo, Ohio First Church for hosting this event.

■ **Mark Your Calendar:** March 21 and April 1 are two important dates for you to remember! On Sabbath, March 21 from 4:30 pm to 6 pm (EST) the Adventist Review will present live via satellite, *The Acts Files (Galaxy 4, Channel 11)*. This program, hosted by senior editor Bill Johnsson, focuses on the positive power of change in individual lives. Specific testimonies will be shared in interviews with church members who are out to change their world. Also, a brief video report on church growth in Cuba will open the program. This report is just a prelude to the one hour report on Maranatha's church construction project in Cuba and the national evangelistic crusade. The Cuba report will air on Wednesday, April 1, 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm (EST), Galaxy 9, Channel 22.

■ **Satellite PREACH:** Nik Satelmajer from the GC Ministerial Department just e-mailed to me an update on the PREACH program that will be distributed live by satellite on Tuesday, March 31 from 1pm to 5:30 pm (EST). This professional training seminar for Adventist and non-Adventist clergy has already attracted a much larger audience than had originally been planned. At this writing, approximately 500 downlink sites have signed up. This seminar will be seen in Hawaii as well as Alaska, Canada as well as Florida and even Bermuda and Jamaica! The Adventist Communication Network (ACN) declares this to be the largest program in which they have been involved, with the exception of NET '96. About 10% of the sites are sponsored by churches, medical centers, universities and seminaries of other denominations. Several convents, military installations and a state prison chaplain's department have also signed on to receive the seminar. Nik tells me that Adventist Church

pastors have been calling his office to say they are thrilled to have a seminar of great value to offer their colleagues.

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #105:** Today critics sometimes question whether or not Ellen White's messages can be trusted. Interestingly, awhile after God gave the first vision to her in December, 1844, she herself wondered if possibly they were not genuine, but rather were the result of mesmerism. Others had claimed this so often that she began having her own doubts. After being struck dumb for a day (see *Life Sketches*, p. 89) her doubts were removed. From personal experience, she came to know positively that she could trust the messages God asked her to deliver.

In his book, *Believe His Prophets*, pp. 133-135, Dr. D. E. Rebok recounts a most interesting story that never would have happened had Ellen White entertained doubts about her work.

Here is the story. In vision, God once gave Ellen White a message for a certain man. She was not told his name, nor was she shown his face. She only heard his voice. The angel instructed her that when she heard that voice she was to deliver a specific message. There was no room for human guesswork or imaginings.

It was some time before Mrs. White again heard *that* voice. She and her husband, James, had just come onto a camp ground. Rather than waiting to get settled in their tent, Ellen wanted to go directly to the meeting that was then in progress. As she and her husband made their way to the main tent, she heard the voice.

Knowing she must do exactly as she had been instructed, without a moment's hesitation Ellen took her husband's arm and started down the aisle toward the pulpit where the minister was speaking. It does not take a great deal of imagination to sense what was happening in that congregation. Doubtless every eye in that tent was riveted on that 5 ft. 2 in. [1.8 m.] woman. "What is Ellen White going to do?" must surely have been upon everyone's mind.

Just before arriving at the speaker's desk, James sat down. Looking up at the minister, who by this time had paused in the middle of his sermon, Ellen White said, "My brother, you have no business to be standing in that desk speaking to these people." She went on to say that she had been shown that in another state there was a woman who called him husband, and there were children there who called him father. Continuing, she said that on this very campground there also was a woman who called him husband, and children here who called him father.

As might be guessed, the man disappeared. Ellen White, who had never seen him before, and had only heard his voice in vision, was now left to deal with the startled audience. Fortunately, the man's brother was present. He acknowledged that everything Sister White had just said was true. Some time earlier his brother had shared with him in confidence that he was living a double life.

The effect of Ellen White's message was immediate; God's Spirit came into the camp and a real revival followed. In our litigious American society, our first thought is, "What if Ellen White had made a mistake?" What if she rebuked the wrong man? What if it was at another meeting where she was to deliver the message? What if...? Those questions are ours, not hers. From an

unimpeachable Source, she knew she could trust the heavenly messages she was asked to deliver, and so can we. [What happened to the minister? The White Estate does not know. He was indirectly related to Elder F. B. Armitage, from whom the story originated.]