

# From the G.C. President

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■ **Pentecost '98, Exciting Growth and Vision:** On Saturday night, May 23, I began my long journey back to Washington from South Africa. The purpose of this trip was to see first-hand the fruition of satellite evangelism in Africa through Pentecost '98. Having been involved in conceiving this project, I was eager to see a bold idea become a reality. My soul was so stirred by what I experienced that I found it difficult to sleep on the 16-hour flight home. And now, I am once again eager to share my experiences with you.

After arriving in Johannesburg and before visiting a few of the downlink sites, I spent most of Friday in interviews with radio and television reporters. These appointments were arranged by Jonathan Gallagher, news director for the General Conference. The interviews, and the subsequent news stories that followed, provided the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a unique opportunity to define itself and its mission to a larger cross-section of South African society that may have not been reached by Pentecost '98.

**A Bold Idea of Growth:** Currently, Pentecost '98 has attracted 300,000 people gathered at 470 sites in 41 countries and kingdoms on the African continent. All are watching as Jamaican evangelist, Fitz Henry, preaches in the auditorium of Soweto's Vista University. Each day Pastor Henry's message is being translated into 16 languages. Pentecost '98 is the most extensive evangelistic outreach ever attempted by the Adventist Church. Attendance already exceeds the totals from NET '96. Six thousand people gather each evening in Lusaka, Zambia alone, making it the largest downlink location to date.

**A Bold Idea With Vision:** As preparations were under way for this massive event, two very different groups of believers shared a common vision for this outreach. One group is from northeast Namibia, an arid and poor area that obviously could not afford the purchase of downlink equipment. Yet, these believers brought their cattle, sheep, and goats to the Namibian church headquarters and asked its leaders to sell the animals and buy the equipment necessary for them to participate in Pentecost '98. What amazing vision and dedication! The other group can be found in Midwestern America. About 18 months ago, I spoke with Pastor Charles Sandefur, president of the Mid-America Union and board chair of PorterCare Adventist Health, about this project. He presented the idea of Pentecost '98 to the board, who had recently voted to dedicate 10% of its profits to the mission of the church and 10% of those funds (10% of 10%) directly to Global Mission projects. The board voted an appropriation of US\$125,000, of which US\$75,000 would be used to help purchase downlink equipment for 16 unentered areas. On Sabbath in Soweto, I had the privilege of introducing Pastor Sandefur, and Terry White, president of PorterCare Adventist Health, to the congregation as they presented these funds to Pastors Wakaba and Bekker, Southern Africa Union president and treasurer, respectively. It is incredible to watch vision and dedication for a bold idea slice through the barriers of culture and economics to find success in working together with the blessings of God.

I've placed a more complete report about Pentecost '98 on the Travel Highlights section of the General Conference Presidential Home page at: <http://www.adventist.org/gc/presidential>.

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #115:** I want to share one more story that illustrates Ellen White's statement in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 671, that God showed her

events from the past, present, and future, including seeing people whom she had not met in real life. The experience occurred in 1893 while she was on a visit to Long Point, Parmetta Bay, New Zealand. (It is the setting for Letter 1, 1893. The story is based on Manuscript 59, 1893, and Arthur L. White's *Ellen G. White, the Australian Years, 1891-1900*, pp. 100-104, and his *Campfire Junior Stories*, 1963, pp. 15,16.)

Having been busy working in New Zealand since early March, by the end of July Ellen White felt she needed a break from her work. Martha Brown, a young convert whom Ellen White had met in Wellington, had invited Mrs. White to Long Point for a few days' rest. She decided to accept. Martha was at the train station to meet Ellen White, and those who were traveling with her, when she arrived. Martha's mother, a congenial woman, had been a widow for eight years. She was the mother of thirteen living children, three of whom, though unmarried, were living on a farm that they rented from their mother located quite a distance from Long Point. Only Martha and her mother were Seventh-day Adventist's when Ellen White arrived for her visit. Obviously, Mrs. White found herself in the midst of a needy mission field.

While with the Browns, Mrs. White labored for those members of the family who were living at home. At family worship on Monday morning, Ellen White personally invited by name, the four oldest children present to accept Christ. All of them did so.

But that was not the full extent of her fruitful missionary endeavors. On Thursday night, August 3, a vivid scene passed before her. "The angel of God said, 'Follow me.' I seemed to be in a room in a rude building." She then went on to describe seeing young men playing cards. Young women were there also watching the card playing that was going on.

In the vision, Ellen White asked, "Who are these and what does this scene represent?" The word was spoken, "Wait." Then she saw the young men drinking. Again she asked, "Who are these?" The answer came, "A portion of the family where you are visiting." Not only did the angel speak the names of those young people, but each one's weaknesses and dangers were described. In her appeal to them, written out after she had returned home, Ellen White urged the young people to turn from their card playing and drinking. She also warned the mother about what her children who were living away from home were doing (Letter 1, 1893).

About this experience, Ellen White wrote in her diary, "Three of the children, all unmarried, are [away] from home on a farm rented to them by their mother. In the night season I was shown that little company and the course which they were pursuing. The young men were playing cards and drinking intoxicating drink. I arose about two o'clock a.m. and wrote out the scene and as soon as I can will have it copied for them to receive the warning from God to them" (Ms. 59, 1893).

Ellen White's visit was to last only a week, but it was raining so hard that it was not until her third try that she was able to return to Wellington. Reflecting on her experience, Ellen White wrote, "We decided our work was not done and felt reconciled to the delay" (*Ibid.*). Eventually, after receiving the letter she wrote them, the absent young people also gave their hearts to the Lord.