

From the G.C. President

June 8, 1998

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■ **A Report from Jerusalem:** This weekend found me in Israel to serve as keynote speaker for the First International Jerusalem Bible Conference. This important conference lists an agenda of over sixty Biblical issues to be addressed by 220 participants—mostly college religion teachers from all around the world. Scholarly papers presented at this conference will be on-line soon. On Sabbath, the conference participants joined a majority of the 700+ Adventists in Israel for the morning worship service held at the YMCA, located directly across the street from the headquarters of the Israel Mission. According to our leaders there, this congregation was the largest group of Seventh-day Adventists to ever meet in Israel. For divine worship, I had the opportunity to preach about the importance of the Sabbath. *The Sabbath: An Advance On Eternity*, is one in a series of about sixteen sermons that will be video recorded during my speaking appointments in 1998. Also during this week I will be attending, by invitation from the government of Iraq, meetings with other religious leaders in Baghdad. In next week's FTP I will offer you a more complete report of events in Israel and Iraq. And of course, a more detailed report of this trip (with pictures) can be found at: http://www.adventist.org/gc/presidential_travel_highlights.

■ **An Historic Event:** On Sabbath, June 6, the Euro-Africa Division (EUD) celebrated the 50th anniversary of the German Voice of Hope. The celebration was broadcast by satellite from Darmstadt to almost 200 churches throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. This is the first satellite broadcast from Europe to Europe in EUD history!

■ **Students Injured by Storm:** Please pray for the students, faculty and staff of Wisconsin Academy in the North American Division. During the evening of Tuesday, June 2, as the campus was preparing for graduation weekend, a tornado seriously injured two students while they helped family members during the storm. This tornado was so severe that it blew the gymnasium roof off as cars and trees were thrown to the other side of the campus.

■ **Hope for Chad:** Last week I received an update on the status of the Adventist Church in the African country of Chad, one of the poorest countries on Earth. This report was prepared for me by Gary Krause, director of communication for Global Mission, who has just returned from a visit there. According to Gary, our church workers are enthusiastic despite difficult circumstances. Currently, there are very few pastors in Chad, and none of them have any means of transportation. Allow me to share with you a paragraph from Gary's report. "It was humbling for me to discover Global Mission pioneers who are still working despite not having received any stipend for more than a year. I think of Nguerabaye—a married man with four children—who is working in the unentered city of Moissala. Through his efforts, there are almost 50 baptized Seventh-day Adventists in this city. Among their number are former prostitutes and drunkards. At no stage did Nguerabaye ever complain about his situation. Why has he kept working? Nguerabaye answers, 'I want to free people from guilt by telling them about the blood of Jesus.' And so on Sabbath morning I worshiped with hundreds and hundreds of townspeople, gathered to hear the Gospel preached."

1867. James and Ellen White and J. N. Andrews had come to hold revival meetings. Sadly, the church was in real need of a revival. Ever since their pastor, Elder Frederick Wheeler, had moved to New York a decade earlier, things had not gone well for the struggling congregation. One member, W. H. Ball, was so outspoken in his criticisms that he had discouraged the rest of the members to the point where they no longer held Sabbath School. One man had again taken up his old habit of chewing tobacco. No wonder the young people in the congregation wanted nothing to do with the church. This was the condition of things when the three leaders arrived.

The meetings began on Sabbath and continued throughout the week. The Monday morning meeting lasted about five hours. Looking over the assembled congregation, Ellen White began addressing one person after another, pointing out the problems in their lives that had been shown her in vision. Seated there that day was 19-year old Eugene Farnsworth. It was his father, William Farnsworth, one of the first Sabbath keeping Adventists in the world, who had started chewing tobacco again. Eugene knew it because while working that winter in the woods with his father he had seen where his father had scuff the snow with his boot trying to cover up the tell-tale brown stains, evidence of his filthy habit.

As Eugene sat there listening to Mrs. White reprove the sins of others, he wished to himself that she would tackle the case of his father. Almost as soon as the thought had gone through his mind, Ellen White spoke to William Farnsworth about his tobacco habit. And, she added, he had tried to deceive others into thinking that he no longer had the problem. Needless to say, this experience convinced young Eugene that he was witnessing the prophetic gift in action.

After Ellen White had finished, she sat down to give people an opportunity to respond. As a result of that meeting, there was a real revival among the adults of that congregation. One after another stood and acknowledged the truthfulness of what Ellen White had been shown about them. In addition, confessions were offered, and wrongs were righted.

Once the adults had made things right, it was time to work for the conversion of the youth. On Christmas day, December 25, James and Ellen White, and J. N. Andrews put forth earnest effort on behalf of the young people. As the youth saw their parents confessing their mistakes, many of them were visibly moved. Now they were ready to give their hearts to the Lord. That day thirteen young people expressed their desire to become Christians. Later, five others not there that day also were converted.

Twelve of the young people wanted to be baptized without delay, so in nearby Millen Pond a hole was sawed in the ice so the service could be performed. The other six waited until spring. Of those eighteen young people who gave their hearts to the Lord that week, nine eventually became paid workers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, either ministers, Bible workers, or missionaries. Eugene Farnsworth, the man we also talked about in last week's segment, became an ordained minister. (Adapted from Arthur L. White's *Ellen G. White, The Progressive Years, 1862-1876*, pp. 215-219, and his *Notes and Papers Concerning Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy*, 1974 ed., pp. 336-338.)

Off the Back Burner

Segment #117: This week I want to recount another story that happened at Washington, New Hampshire. It was Christmas week,