

From the G.C. President

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A New Spin On Global Mission: So often we equate the work of Global Mission with rural and/or developing countries, but planting churches can be extremely difficult in the economically developed countries. An example is Australia, which is one of the most secular countries in the western world. The South Pacific Division (SPD) is taking seriously the challenge of reaching out to their large “unchurched” population. Global Mission is supporting the planting of a new congregation among the rapidly growing central coast of New South Wales, just north of Sydney. Although this new church has not been officially planted yet, about 60 people are worshipping and studying together each Sabbath. Church pastor, Wayne Krause, reports that three people have already been baptized, and five more unchurched people have requested baptism. “I wonder what will happen when we actually start the church!” commented Pastor Krause. The purpose of the project is to specifically reach the unchurched in the 20 to 40 age group.

This Global Mission project reflects a beginning assault on perhaps the most difficult challenge to the future of Adventism. To truly finish the work of God we must effectively develop a formula for reaching the secular, unchurched individual in the most advanced countries of the world. To shirk from this work would be to admit that this people group is unreachable and that our message does not have any meaning or relevance for them. Pastor Krause and others who have taken up this challenge are proving each day that this is simply not true.

Global Mission Enters New Tribal Group in Nepal: Speaking of classic Global Mission stories, here is an exciting one sent to me recently by Dorothy Watts.

Two Global Mission Pioneers were sent to Dharan, nearly 400 kilometers East of Kathmandu, to try to find those interested in studying the Bible. But in spite of their hard work, they seemed to have no success. However, in Begri, about a hundred kilometers from Dharan, they made friends with five young men. Three of these young men are from the Tharu tribal group, an unentered people group in the Himalaya mountains. These five were baptized on April 28, 1998 and they have asked their new Christian friends to come to their villages for a long visit in order to teach family and friends. “We believe that most of them would be glad to know the beautiful message of Jesus Christ. Soon we should have a big group worshipping here each Sabbath,” said one of the five baptized.

The South Brazil Union Education and Social Welfare work has been granted one of the 50 awards named “1998 Most Efficient.” This award was given to the South Brazil Union in recognition for its superior organization, reliability and general efficiency in their philanthropic work. These awards are granted by Kanitz Associates, an organization that classifies the 500 best firms, companies and institutions in Brazil.

A New FTP: Next week’s edition will begin a new chapter for FTP. We have re-designed it to be a bit more “reader-friendly.” Also, next week we will begin a new series on the validity of the Scripture.

Off the Back Burner

Heritage Segment #121: This week I continue sharing from the personal experiences that my great grandfather, Elder E. E. Andross, had with Sister White. The Ellen G. White Estate has transcripts of two interviews that he had with Ellen White at her Elmshaven home. Both were after he became president of the Pacific Union Conference in 1912. The first interview took place on October 2, 1913, and dealt with the work in Southern California, particularly at Loma Linda. Apparently there were some workers who thought they knew better than anyone else about how things should be done. In part, Sister White counseled,

“Of late, I have been specially burdened over the seeming inability of some of our brethren to blend with one another. Satan is at work for the mastery, and he is tempting some to desire to stand at the head. When our brethren unite in labor in the Spirit of Christ, all their difficulties will disappear. This has been presented before me again and again. No matter how patiently those in responsibility endeavor to bring about harmonious action by adjusting difficulties arising from the unsanctified course pursued by some, selfishness will continue to be revealed, and a desire for the supremacy, until these unconverted ones lay aside their preconceived opinions and learn to labor unitedly. Unless they are transformed, they will be just so many clogs to the wheel. The Lord desires that they shall all be so filled with the preciousness of His grace and truth that they will reveal the beauty of holiness in harmonious action. . . .”

Ellen White continues, “Last night, during my waking hours, I was going over these matters. It seemed as if I were standing before my brethren, and saying, When you yourselves are converted, you will see that there is harmony in diversity. We must clear the King’s highway. We are not humble enough. We are so afraid that our own plans shall not be carried out, that we bring confusion to ourselves and to others. The Lord desires us to be in harmony. When we honor Him by walking in the light of His counsel instead of in the light of the sparks of our own kindling, heavenly angels will be our helpers, and we shall see unity and wisdom and the sanctification of the Spirit of God revealed as we have not seen it yet” (Ms 22, 1913).

In the other interview, the discussion revolved around some physicians who were demanding to set their own wages at Loma Linda. Repeatedly during the interview, Sister White rejected this idea, even if the person making the demands decided to quit. The institution, not the worker, must set the wages. Here is how she described the proper attitude of church workers,

“From the beginning, our work has been carried forward on self-sacrificing principles. Over and over again we have proved the value of these principles. And when men have attempted to turn from the way of self-denial, they have not prospered. The Lord has not blessed them in any such course. . . .”

“The Lord does not leave men to be the sport of the enemy, if they choose to walk in the path of self-sacrifice for the sake of the cause they love. I have proved the Lord; and I speak from experience. . . .The Lord does not mean to leave us. He will be our frontguard and our rearward” (Ms. 14, 1913).