

From the President

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

August 17, 1998

UPDATE

Governor Visits the General

Conference: On Wednesday, August 12, Parris N. Glendening, governor for the state of Maryland, visited the headquarters building for an opportunity to discuss the contributions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the state. "I commend Adventists for the health and education programs they operate in our community. Our future and our children's future depends on what we do, especially in the area of education," commented Governor Glendening. A member of the GC staff asked the Governor how Adventists could broaden our contributions to Maryland communities. In response, Governor Glendening challenged us to be more involved in the lives of children, especially children in poverty and those with little or no parental guidance.

First AGCN World Broadcast

Features the VOP Family Reunion:

The first program to air worldwide through the Adventist Global Communication Network (AGCN) was held at the Loma Linda University Church last Sabbath, August 15. This program, The Voice of Prophecy Family Reunion, performed twice on Sabbath. Each time to "standing room only" audiences with 300 people attending the dress rehearsal on Friday night! The program was broadcast live via 7 satellites to sites in North America, Sydney, Fiji, Singapore, South Africa, Great Britain, Germany and South America. The program was also taped for delayed replay on satellite later in 1998.

Back to School: With the beginning of a new school year, decisions must be

made by Adventist families and local churches of great eternal consequences. Will we make a child's attendance at an Adventist school a financial and spiritual priority in our lives? What should we sacrifice to make this lifetime investment? How much worthy student money can we raise in our church to make this possible? Evidence suggests that faith maturity and denominational loyalty dramatically increases when families, local congregations and church schools become the foundation of a child's life.

FOCUS ON FAITH

The Origin of Scripture: Over the past weeks, we have considered the crisis over Scripture in our church. From today on we are going to look at aspects of Scripture which confirm that the Bible is indeed God's Word.

When Adventists refer to the Bible, they naturally think of the Protestant Bible with its sixty-six books, but this is not the case for many other Christians. Roman Catholics and some Orthodox churches include a number of additional books (the Apocrypha) in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament Canon: The Greek word *canon* comes from the Hebrew *qaneh*, which means "reed". Since reeds were used as measuring rods, the word *canon* came to mean "rule" or "standard", by which other things are measured. The word *canon* occurs in Galatians 6:16 and 2 Corinthians 10:13-16, translated "rule," but it is first used in regard to the books of the Bible, in a technical sense of a standard collection of sacred writings,

by the Church Fathers of the fourth century.

How the Old Testament canon came into existence may never be known in detail. What we do know is that God on occasions told His prophets not only to deliver His messages orally, but also to write them down (e.g., Exod 17:14; Isa 30:8; Jer 30:2; Ezek 43:11; Hab 2:2) as a witness (Deut 31:24-26) for future generations (Isa 30:8). And early in Israel's history we find certain writings being recognized as having divine authority and serving as a written rule in the life of Israel. This can be seen from the people's response to the reading of the "book of the covenant" in Exodus 24:7, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient." Similarly, when the "book of the law" was found in the temple and read before the king and the people in the time of Josiah (2 Chron 34) or when Ezra read it to the people (Neh 8:5-10) it was accepted as having divine authority.

In time the same happened with all other books contained in the Old Testament today. They were acknowledged as having canonical authority, because their authors were recognized as God's spokespersons. Thus, we can say that "the words of the prophets were divinely authoritative from the moment of utterance, and the documents in which they were recorded were canonical in principle, if not in a technical sense, from the first" (F.F. Bruce, *The Book And The Parchments*, 1984, p.94). ■

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