

# Adventist Review

General Organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

April 20, 1980

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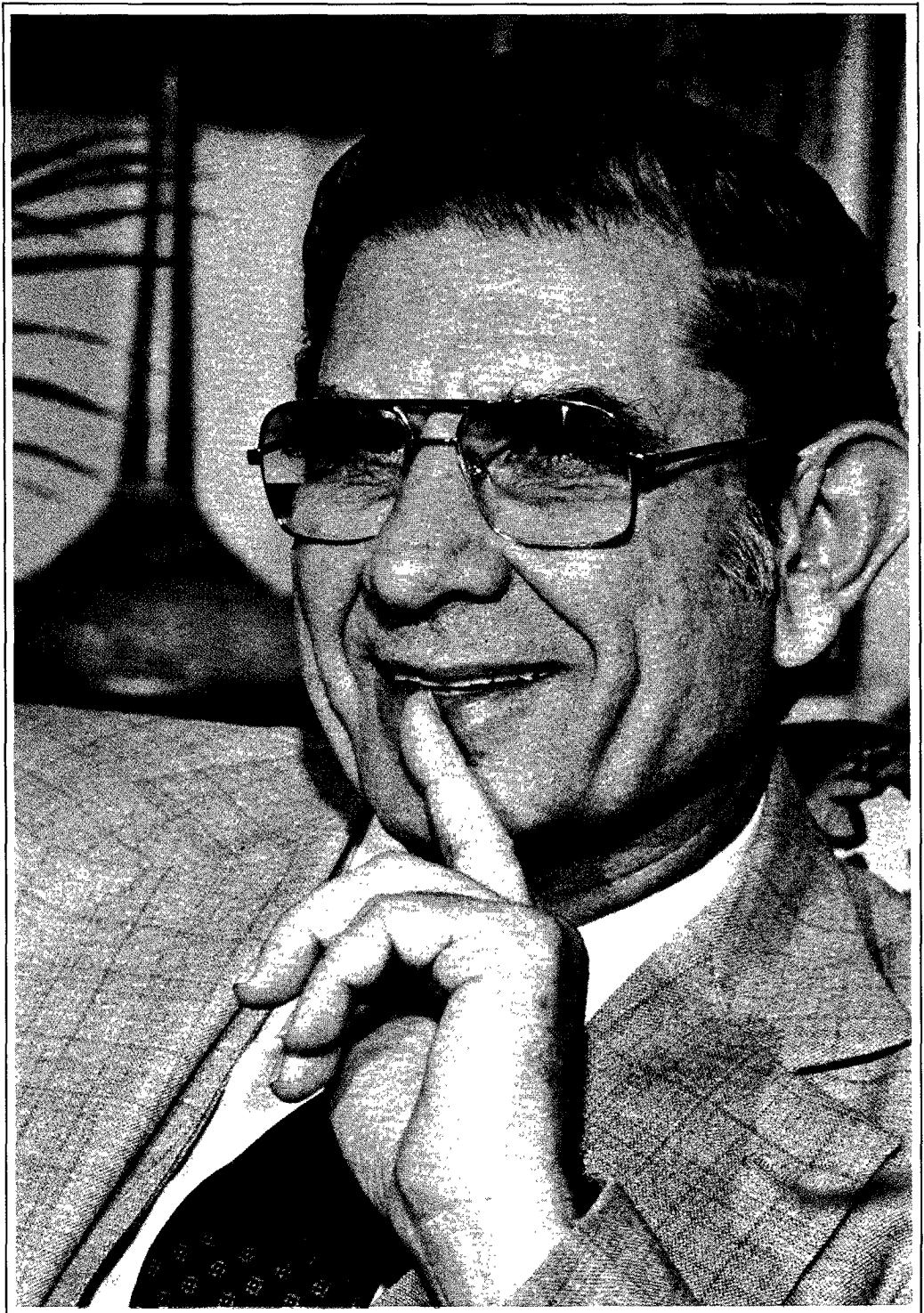
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Neal C. Wilson, who has served as president of the General Conference since January 3, 1979, was reelected at the General Conference session in Dallas, Texas, on April 18, 1980. See his keynote message on page 2.

# “To do the right thing at the right time”

Condensation of the keynote address presented Thursday, April 17, 1980.

By NEAL C. WILSON  
President  
General Conference



This fifty-third session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists gives us an opportunity to take a searching look at both the recent past and the immediate future. Behind us are the perplexing seventies; ahead of us are the challenging eighties. What we do during the next ten days will influence where we shall be during the decade of the nineties. Will we still be planning for General Conference sessions or will our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ have returned in power and great glory?

The past decade has been a turbulent one. Political unrest, war, and bloodshed have temporarily closed doors to the preaching of the gospel. Persecution and imprisonment have hampered the work of the church on several continents. Fragments of information from these areas cause us much concern for our brothers and sisters, who, in spite of such hardships, are faithfully holding aloft the banner of truth. We must unceasingly ask the Lord to protect them from the determined efforts of Satan to discourage and destroy.

As we enter this decade, termed by some analysts as the “Decade of Nightmares,” we can expect more of what we have seen. Inflation is increasing in some countries at the rate of 70 percent, 80 percent, and even 300 percent annually. But through it all we thank God for the loyalty of His people, as well as their faithfulness in stewardship. Throughout this session we will be made aware of how God intervenes and has a solution for every emergency. Both the future and the church are in His hands. His work will move forward triumphantly, and it is our privilege to take the hand of God and move forward with Him.

A rapid recapitulation of a few happenings will reconfirm the fact that ours is truly a universal church. Virtually in every part of the earth—in the cities of Europe, in the emerging countries of Africa, among the millions of Asia, on the continent of Australia, throughout the islands of the South Pacific, and in the Americas—we have witnessed a resurgence of successful pub-

lic evangelism. The dynamic interaction on the part of lay persons, youth, and pastors has resulted in phenomenal numerical growth. For example, in the South American Division, 50,385 precious souls joined the church family in 1979. Mexico, which a few years ago had less than 15,000 members, now has 125,000 members and is one of two new union conferences in the Inter-American Division. Inter-America is the largest division numerically, with nearly 62,000 baptisms last year (approximately 1,200 each week of the year), bringing the membership to approximately 620,000 as of tonight. We rejoice that in three countries on the continent of Africa church growth has resulted in the organization of three additional conferences.

In 1885 Ellen White wrote, “More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications.”—*Evangelism*, p. 693. For nearly 100 years we have anticipated the fulfillment of this prophecy. In 1979 more than 281,000 baptisms were recorded. We are still some distance from the 1,000 per day, but praise the Lord, we averaged nearly 800 for each day last year, and 915 for each day during the fourth quarter of 1979.

Illustrative of the quickening pace in soul winning is the recent thrilling report of an evangelistic field school conducted in Kumasi, Ghana, by Pastor Robert Connors, on loan from the Lake Union Conference in the North American Division. In the first two baptisms, 739 precious souls became members of the Advent family. More recently, the first two baptisms of the Kenneth Cox evangelistic meetings in Panama resulted in more than 700 new members.

## Victories won

I wish I had time to tell you about the P.R.E.A.C.H. program initiated by the General Conference Ministerial Association and *Ministry* magazine; about Festivals of Faith, in which thousands of youth have participated; about the Far Eastern seminary on their beautiful new campus at Silang, near Manila; about the reopening of our now famous training center at Solusi College; about the new college in Rwanda, which will become the focal point of higher education for French-speaking people in Africa; about the progress of the new University College of Eastern Africa, in Kenya; about student missionaries; about new Spirit of Prophecy centers; about the vast outreach of literature evangelism; and about the immense positive influence of our health message and our health-care institutions. I, with you, am eager to hear the reports at this session, which will stir our souls and bring praise to our lips. The *Adventist Review*, which has been such a great blessing and stabilizing factor in the experience of our world family of believers, will carry a daily record of happenings and reports. Each evening the world divisions will tell in graphic ways—not just statistics—how God has led and prospered His people and work.

While quietly giving thanks for victories won, we will not try to hide the disappointments, failures, and

blemishes with verbal cosmetics. Too often we measure success by numbers, finances, beautiful office and church buildings, academic degrees, and organizational strength. Unfortunately, at times these seem to become the end, instead of the means, of carrying on God's work. True success, our Lord tells us, is determined by our discipleship and full reliance on Christ, our trust in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, and our growth and maturity in faith and love. When measured by these norms, how do we look?

We have a mighty work before us, a work that must rise continually to greater prominence. Our efforts in witnessing must become far more extensive, and we cannot cease until our labors encircle the world. Some places that are now a moral wilderness are to become as the garden of the Lord. New territories are to be worked. New churches must be established, new congregations organized. Had we fully trusted the Lord there would be at this time representatives of present truth in every city and in the remote parts of the earth. The whole world is to be illuminated with the glory of God's truth. The final crisis in the great controversy between Christ and Satan is upon us. We must now, by the Holy Spirit's power, be foremost in exalting Christ and the efficacy of His blood, while at the same time proclaiming the special testing truths of the gospel for our times.

We have been told that "it is the very essence of all *right faith* to do the *right thing* at the *right time*."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 24. (Italics supplied.) Do we have the right faith? Is this the right time? What is the right thing to do? I see the Advent Movement facing circumstances similar in many ways to those surrounding God's chosen people on their way from a land of bondage to the land of promise. God had delivered them. He had protected them. He had provided for their needs. In a barren desert a constant source of fresh water made the people comfortable and secure.

It was never God's plan or purpose for them to wander in the wilderness. In His grand design they were to become a spectacle to all nations in the Promised Land. Several times God gave them the opportunity to enter in and possess Canaan, but on each occasion they showed doubt, they murmured, and chose to remain in the wilderness. They had lost their sense of mission. Their vision was blurred. Their faith could not hurdle the barriers that stood between them and the Promised Land. Hope of reaching Canaan was virtually gone.

## The church's mandate

Today God's church—the church that you and I represent—has a mandate, a sacred commission. Since 1888 the Lord has been trying to get us headed for our heavenly home. In the light of this solemn reality, there are ten areas that in my judgment need emphasis at this fifty-third world council.

**First:** We need a clarification and a true understanding of "mission." The further removed we become from our pioneers, the less we seem to sense the true reason for

our existence. Unless our mission is clear to all, we have no incentive to grasp our message or what we ought to do about fulfilling God's design for His people. Most people that I speak with have a fuzzy concept of mission. Perhaps we have come to the time when we need a General Conference Commission or task force to define "mission," and then to motivate all areas of our church with the holy and bold assignment of fulfilling our prophetic mission.

The Stewardship Department recently produced a study outline entitled "The Spirit of the Pioneers." It reminds us of the self-sacrifice of the early pioneers; how they gave their last dollar and then gave themselves on the altar of service that the work of God might advance. This is the spirit we need today. It is the only spirit that will meet the needs of the hour. It is the spirit that God is calling for in this fifty-third session. This session must be a springboard to the future. Let our socializing and renewing of old friendships result in encouragement to reach new targets. Let our speculation about new appointments and transfers inspire us to pray for the consummation of God's work.

**Second:** There are indications that we are not certain about our "message." God has raised up a people whose singular objective and global assignment is to proclaim to the whole world the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. In addition to the cardinal doctrines of the historic Christian church, these angelic proclamations embody the distinctive truths of the sanctuary and righteousness by faith. The church exists for the purpose of touching lives with redemptive action. We are to teach young and old how to live and how to share and how to witness in today's complex world.

Recently, several articles appeared in an evangelical journal that made me increasingly concerned that we may be speaking with a muffled voice. One of the articles was entitled "Will the Real Seventh-day Adventist Please Stand Up." The article indicated that we are being misunderstood and misinterpreted. We are being accused of double talk. It is alleged that we have several theological schools of thought in our church, that there are discrepancies between our terminology and our substance.

Challenges of this nature are not altogether from outside the church. Indeed, some of the most serious are from within. There have been, and will continue to be, efforts to shake the pillars of our faith. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that grievous wolves would appear among the flock to despoil it. We have been warned that some of the leading lights of our church will flicker and go out, but the church as a whole will be strengthened by such experiences. As individuals, and especially as leaders, we need to know the certainty of our faith so that specious arguments or false doctrines will not shake us.

There must be a renewal of personal Bible study and family worship. A reemphasis on Biblical preaching and teaching, supported and strengthened by enlightenment

that comes from the study of the inspired and authoritative writings of Ellen White, is necessary. Our hearts are to beat in unison. We are to speak with one voice. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, how shall men and women be warned of impending doom? Our message is distinctive. Its theology differs from that of other Christian bodies. Unless this is true and is perceived to be so by others, God's purpose in calling into existence a prophetic movement of destiny has been in vain.

**Third:** We need to reread the Annual Council action of 1976 on "Evangelism, Soul Winning, Territorial Assignment, and Finishing God's Work." It is not difficult for me to understand why the enemy of truth has sought to bury this significant action under a mass of other plans and routine office activities. I believe now, as I did then, that this document, if implemented under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, could produce unprecedented action. It seeks to pinpoint the urgency and love for souls that must grip our hearts before we can enjoy the mighty blessing of the latter rain. It demands much from leadership. It demands administrative action to break the spell of "business as usual," and to penetrate all ranks of the church with a vision that is unblurred and undimmed. It is for us now to determine the steps that will give absolute priority to evangelism at all levels and on all fronts.

The task of moving the world church toward placing unquestioned priority on evangelism and soul winning is an awesome one, and fraught with many difficulties. But it is essential that this be done by leaders in every church, every conference, every union, every division, and in every institution. In short, soul winning must be the consuming passion of the world church. All evangelism centers in Jesus Christ, who was, and is, the supreme Evangelist. To be evangelistic is to be like Christ, and the result of evangelism is Christlikeness. The phrase "finishing God's work" encompasses both an inward and outward work. It denotes a people saved by grace, working to save others. It requires the reaching of every person on earth with the claims and promises of God's message of love and salvation. At this fifty-third session we must not allow anything else to take precedence over these objectives.

**Fourth:** A crucial concern that calls for a new emphasis is the nature of witness to be borne by the homes and families of those who have been chosen to reflect the character of Christ to our society. Unfortunately, Satan has made his most determined efforts to weaken and destroy that witness. The home can and should be the most eloquent sermon in favor of the gospel. In a loose and promiscuous society this church must take seriously the fact that our homes constitute the greatest mission field that exists today.

What about designating the first hours of each Sabbath (that is, Friday evening) as Adventist family night? Bringing our families together at the beginning of the Sabbath could enrich family ties, strengthen relationships with our Lord, and prepare us for fellowship with the

larger spiritual family in church the next day. It may require effort and personnel to strengthen the quality of home and family life in our church. What have we gained if we preach to others but lose our own children and families?

**Fifth:** Recently I wrote a memo to a number of individuals asking for the names of qualified women who could be considered for elected leadership posts in the General Conference. I received very few suggestions. It seems appropriate, therefore, for me to appeal to local conference and union leaders to consider women along with men for positions of responsibility. I am not only urging that women be represented in the administrative structure of the church, but also that we harness the energies and talents of all the women so as to better accomplish the task of finishing the work assigned by our Lord.

Near the turn of the century, Mrs. S. M. I. Henry, an evangelist of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, joined our church. This deeply spiritual woman of national prominence launched a program to save the women of the Adventist Church and, through them, to save the world. She flung her energies into organizing a women's ministry. Her objective was to rally the nearly dead spirit of Adventist women.

In a sermon at the General Conference session, March 4, 1899, she focused attention on the need of a women's ministry, and urged women first to serve in the home as Christian mothers and wives, and second, to minister to others who came within their sphere of influence. Unfortunately, her vision of an army of women workers never materialized. Her sudden death in 1900 shocked the church, and soon her *Review* column, "Women's Gospel Work," no longer appeared. Her nationwide noon prayer session stopped abruptly, and her concepts of a women's movement became a thing of the past.

Along with placing women in positions of responsibility, this church desperately needs to revive the prime objective of Mrs. Henry's movement—the soul-winning efforts of women. Perhaps her ideal for a women's ministry can best be summarized in her own words:

"Each [woman] should have, all the time, someone for whom she will work, and should never leave a soul until that soul has become a worker for other souls."—*Supplement to the Review and Herald*, Dec. 6, 1898. "A woman-ministry must of necessity differ from a man-ministry and must be received directly from God Himself, since He alone can know her well enough to give her any assignment."—*A Woman's Ministry*, p. 36. I repeat, the church must find ways to organize and utilize the vast potential represented by our talented, consecrated women.

**Sixth:** My next area of emphasis is Christian education. So much depends on the operation of a system from primary grades through university. Christian education is not a matter of option. It is a mandate. It is a church doctrine. Where in certain parts of the world Christian education has not been an integral part of the church

organization, we find a weakened thrust and witness. Although a most costly venture, it is really an investment paying rich dividends.

Quite frequently we hear criticisms of our centers of Christian education. We admit that some things should be different. We admit that the philosophies of the world at times find their way into our schools via textbooks, through teachers trained in non-Adventist institutions, and through the failure of administration to achieve fully a Christian life style on campus. In spite of some flaws, I want to attest, with thankful heart, that there is a large, measurable, and essential difference between Adventist schools and others.

Amid rising costs, increasing governmental involvement, threat of decreasing enrollments due to lower birth rates, and encroaching worldly concepts, it is my observation that our teachers and administrators are doing an admirable job and deserve our full support.

**Seventh:** The apostle Paul, in describing the church, used the term "family." God has made of one blood all nations. In every family the members differ a little from one another, but in major issues they usually stand and work together as a unit.

In the area of human and race relations the church has not reached the ideal, but we have moved closer to one another. Continually yielding to the Holy Spirit will help to break down barriers and will result in a praiseworthy exhibit to the world. History reveals that, generally, people have loved their own. To balance narrow self-interest with the larger concern for the total community is difficult. Self-concern must not be allowed to overshadow our responsibility toward the total spiritual fam-

ily of which we are a part. Leadership must endeavor to provide, within the context of the church and its objectives, a climate favorable to appropriate degrees of freedom for self-direction and self-fulfillment by minorities.

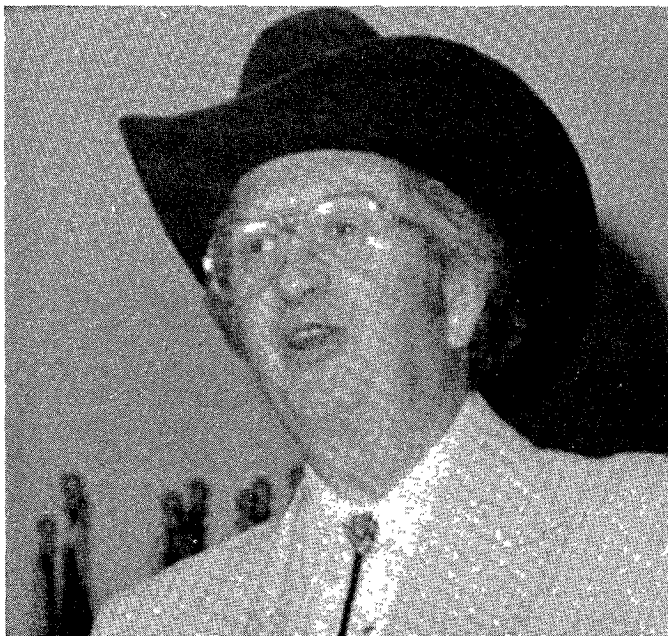
To grant this kind of opportunity and responsibility requires a great deal of trust, which has always been a prerequisite to unity. It is neither necessary nor wise to impose a single form of church life on all ethnic and cultural groups. We should not allow a climate to exist that breeds, in human hearts, feelings of uncertainty about "belonging."

How do we create the opportunity for true involvement and partnership within a group that has so many diverse cultures, languages, colors, and ethnic groups? There is no simple answer, but it is a challenge that must be faced honestly by the whole church. Without putting undue strain upon our unity in Christ, accommodations must be made. It is equally important that there be among us a spiritual affinity that will transcend our ethnic and cultural differences, our likes and dislikes, and thus resolve the strife that violates the basic kinship of the human race and repudiates the most basic affirmations of the gospel. This will happen "not by might, nor by power" but by the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Eighth:** I have another irrepressible aspiration to share with you, and that is to provide greater latitude for lay persons to develop certain programs and projects. We must encourage, and not be afraid of, lay initiative. Many ideas might be cited to illustrate my point. I will mention one that I believe opens up exciting possibilities for carrying our message to the world.

I have reference to the omnipresent realm of the electronic media. We thank God that this year Elder H. M. S. Richards is celebrating his fiftieth anniversary—a golden jubilee—in radio ministry. Faith for Today is one of the oldest continuous religious programs on television. It Is Written has made momentous impact upon the lives of many and has penetrated hitherto unentered areas. The Breath of Life telecast, although relatively new, has arrested the attention of many by giving answers to some of life's vexing questions. The Quiet Hour broadcast reaches millions, and has provided many airplanes and other equipment for a number of our divisions. Adventist World Radio shortwave frequencies have leaped national boundaries, oceans, and continents, bringing Christ to hungry hearts in many languages. The Spanish language radio and television program Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, emanating from New York City, has been used effectively as a modern instrument of soul winning. Yet, with all of these, and other electronic efforts, we have only just begun to reach earth's 4 billion inhabitants. In my judgment, the use of the electronic media must be expanded beyond anything we know at the present time.

Recently, in the city of Lubbock, Texas, not far from here, a carefully controlled experiment using 30- and



**Wearing his cowboy clothes and hat, Ben E. Leach, president of the Southwestern Union, extended a warm, Texas-style greeting to delegates.**



The flags of 190 nations and the motto "By His Spirit" decorate the platform at the Dallas Convention Center, the venue of the fifty-third General Conference session. At the opening meeting, Neal C. Wilson, General Conference president, addressed assembled delegates.

60-second television spots was launched. Scientific samplings of public opinion were taken prior to beginning the spots. After a four-week period, the reactions of the people were tested again. The change in attitude toward Seventh-day Adventists was phenomenal. The documented elimination of prejudice gave eloquent proof of the fact that we must think more in terms of spots to capture the attention of busy, contemporary society. It seems difficult for secular minds to concentrate for 15 or 30 minutes on a religious program. I would like to see spots become very much a part of a gospel saturation campaign in North America and in other parts of the world where the opportunity exists.

Think what would happen if a group of lay persons in North America could be challenged to organize for the purpose of creating a fund of between \$10 and \$20 million. This money could be prudently invested or managed as an endowment so that the major portion of the earnings could be used for electronic media evangelism. This organization might have a few denominational leaders as invited advisers and could allocate available funds based upon objective criteria. My plea is for the church to venture into bold, new, nontraditional experiments. It is my conviction that rather than drying up the wells of regular giving we would see a bursting forth of fountains of spiritual and financial blessing and an unleashing of the latent power and energies that I know exist.

**Ninth:** Another phase of advance whose time surely has come is the inauguration of an ongoing study designed to achieve a desperately needed breakthrough in how to reach the secular-minded and non-Christian peoples of the world with the gospel. This is a science all its own, to which we have given only token attention. This includes the touching of the hundreds of thousands of young lives captured by materialistic philosophies on university campuses, where at present we are almost without voice or witness.

**Tenth:** Now, I come to a sensitive matter that could easily be misunderstood. Please listen carefully as I explain. If the church is to achieve all its God-given objectives, there need to be certain organizational

changes. A variety of policies needs to be refined. New and updated approaches to missionary incentive and recruitment need to be created. Appropriate church-management principles must be adopted so as to guarantee that every hour worked, every dollar spent, every plan conceived, will be cost effective. These aims necessitate greater precision than we now have in the delegation of authority, requirements for accountability, and streamlining of our decision-making process.

We are a church, not a secular corporation. Some things that other organizations can do we cannot. Yet there are sound management principles we can safely use in church operations, thus enhancing our global witness. Leadership philosophy, the role of the General Conference, the function of its departments, office efficiency, travel, the most profitable use of human and financial resources, must be open to scrutiny, amenable to change.

Without going into a detailed analysis this evening, I would like this body to know that I personally have the conviction that certain modifications are imperative and long overdue. In speaking with lay and church leaders on my visits to the various divisions of the General Conference this past year, I sensed a feeling of urgency that something needs to be done now, not at some future date. We will make several specific recommendations to the delegates at this session that may be considered revolutionary by some, but which are necessary in order to make it possible for the new administration of the General Conference to deal with certain challenges, calculate strengths, measure weaknesses, and determine how we can conserve and redirect money, talent, time, and effort in the greatest soul-winning thrust we have ever known.

Our burgeoning growth into a large world organization demands that there be a renewal of the driving force and compelling passion of the early Christians and our Adventist pioneers.

Our primary objective must be to help the pastor and his associates in leadership to bring our members together in a concerned, coordinated, effective relationship, so as to develop a dynamic soul-winning thrust equal to an invasion force! This concept demands the elimination of our attitude of departmental protection-

ism. The General Conference must set the example and take the lead in simplifying relationships, so that it can be a model for all levels of church government. Surely we have learned some lessons during the past 79 years since the 1901 General Conference reorganization. Can we not wisely combine certain of our functions, which we call departments, into larger "related" departments, or at least bring them into a close organic relationship with each other, which should guarantee our ability to deliver coordinated "packages" that make sense to our members and pastors in the local church, where the work is actually done?

Having shared with you these ten major concerns—and there are others—I wish to go back to my analogy between God's church in the desert and God's people tonight.

Speaking to His servant and leader of the people, God said in Deuteronomy 2:3-13 (R.S.V.): "“You have been going about this mountain country long enough; turn northward. . . . For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands; he knows your going through this great wilderness; these forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.” So we went on. . . . And we turned. . . . We went over the brook Zered.””

It is a sad but thrilling story, and quite typical of our situation today. Eleven days after leaving Mount Horeb, God's people encamped at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, not far from the borders of the Promised Land. Unbelief and distrust of God's promises kept them from possessing Canaan. During all their wanderings, wherever the need existed, water was supplied miraculously through God's mercy. From the clefts of the rock it gushed out beside their encampment. Christ, the Source of all temporal and spiritual blessings, caused the cascading streams to flow.

This time, however, just before the children of Israel reached Kadesh, the living stream that for 40 years had surged forth beside their encampment, ceased to flow. It was the Lord's method of testing His people. He wanted to prove whether they would trust His providence or imitate the unbelief of their fathers. The hills of Canaan were in sight. A few days' march would have taken them through Edom, Moab, and to the Jordan River on the edge of Canaan. The command had been given to Moses—"Turn northward." The cessation of the miraculous flow of water should have been the cause for rejoicing because it was a token that their wilderness experience and wanderings were at an end. But, blinded by unbelief, that which should have been an evidence of the fulfillment of God's promise was made the occasion for doubt and murmuring. Clamoring for the familiar wilderness trails and camping places, they seemingly gave up all hope of possessing Canaan.

How much like many of us today. Failing to walk by faith instead of sight, we continue to delay His advent. We grieve our Lord by attitudes of fear, distrust, rebellion, and obstinacy when confronted by the first trial.

Take God at His word! Act promptly! Angels are waiting to work with and for us.

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 19.

We must use all the talents God has given us and be grateful for all the gifts of the Spirit present among us as a people. We must break the bands that have bound us with timidity, conventionalism, and traditionalism. We must, with boldness, venture forth knowing that God will unleash power that hitherto has been unknown. We must give the Holy Spirit a chance. We must remain strong and loyal to our organization, because one of the gifts of the Spirit is government. We must repent for our lack of faith and humbly reach out and grasp all that Heaven has in store for us. The words that are before you—"By His Spirit"—must become very real to each of us and be the guiding force and strength of our fifty-third General Conference session.

Remember, the Holy Spirit was left in charge of God's work in this world to prepare Him a people. The Holy Spirit is the resident member of the Godhead among us. How often do we plead for His wisdom? Or do we look to some other source? We cannot receive divine signals by watching television or by reading even the good books of current writers. How much will He be a part of our session? How often will He be consulted? Will this theme, "By His Spirit," just be words for us to look at and to repeat or will we allow the Holy Spirit to warm and convict and unite our hearts?

As I read earlier, "It is the very essence of all right faith to do the right thing at the right time."

My fellow leaders, my brothers and sisters, this is the right time! This is God's hour! We must arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon His people. We must turn "northward." We must head for home. We must fulfill God's destiny for His people. We have a message to give to the nations. There must be no further delay. We must no longer be content to do things as usual and remain in the "desert" with only small blessings, when the hills of the Promised Land are in sight. In a revolted world, and in a strange and barren land, it is our mission to make Christ, the living Word, fully known to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

As we open this world conference, the command of our Lord is unequivocal: "Turn northward!" At the close of this session nine days hence, will you and I be able to declare, "By His Spirit, we turned"? I ask that you join me in a covenant of obedience to follow wherever He leads, to heed the divine signals, and by His grace to head for heaven and home. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." □



# THE DAY IN DALLAS

Friday, April 18

By Lawrence Maxwell

"Be sure to tell everyone about the parade Friday afternoon!"

Kenneth Wood, editor of the *ADVENTIST REVIEW*, and his vivacious wife, Miriam, were eating with George and Nellie Vandeman (of *It Is Written*) at the hotel restaurant when I went there in hopes of getting supper Wednesday evening.

"It's going to be terrific!" the editor enthused. "Byron!" He turned to *Review* photographer J. Byron Logan, sitting at a nearby table. "Byron, be sure to get lots of pictures. Hundreds of overseas delegates and missionaries dressed in national costume are going to march from the convention center through the heart of downtown Dallas to Thanks-Giving Square, where Neal Wilson will lead a special service. There will be all kinds of picture possibilities, and we must let *REVIEW* readers see them. And, Lawrence, be sure to include the parade in your Story of the Day. Nothing like this has happened at a General Conference session before."

It is now four o'clock on Friday morning. The parade is still in the future, and I'm eager to see it and tell you all about it. But at this reflective moment I am quite sure the parade is not the only reason this General Conference session will be remembered—not after attending the opening meeting last night.

This session may well be ranked with the historic meetings of 1888 and 1901 for the profound changes it promises to bring to the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. More on that in a moment.

## A vision-enlarging place

This is a great place to hold a General Conference session, especially when skyrocketing inflation has so many treasurers telling us to pull in and cut back. Nothing has been pulled in or cut back about Dallas, Texas. In his welcoming remarks last night, Ben Leach, president of the Southwestern Union, said, "All Texans brag; in Texas it is a patriotic duty to brag." But are they really bragging? Or is their vision so large, are their accomplishments so extensive, that they are merely "telling it like it is"?

This convention center was built on a huge scale. Its 10,000-seat Arena, where we met last night, is just the medium-sized auditorium in this vast complex. There is a theater besides, accommodating thousands more, and the Grand Hall, big enough to seat 20,000. We will meet there the last weekend. It is beautifully landscaped out-

side with artificial hills and lakes. Through it all there is a feeling of spaciousness, of room to grow, to attempt, and to achieve. The very buildings themselves shame narrow-mindedness; they challenge church leaders and members alike to raise their sights, to lay bold new plans larger and more far-reaching than any the church has attempted before. May God grant that ere we leave, this exciting potential will be abundantly fulfilled!

Business is, of course, the main purpose of a General Conference session—the business of elections, *Church Manual* amendments, and relocation of territorial boundaries. But a greater business than any of these seems to be meeting friends. As Marley told Scrooge, "Humanity is my business." Adventist church members' renewing old acquaintances and kindling new friendships among members from around the world may well be the most important business of this or any other General Conference session.

So all around we see friends clasping hands, sometimes embracing, with greetings tumbling out. "How're you doing?" "How's the wife?" "What are the children doing?" These are the cadences of friendship, the stitches that hold the fabric of the church together.

I rushed out for breakfast just then, and that friendship sewing machine was clicking out the stitches. Going down in the elevator with me was Paul Gordon, of the White Estate in Washington, D.C. We briefly relived the geoscience conference we had participated in a couple of years ago—climbing mountains, exploring caves, seeking evidences of Creation. I had just sat down at the table when I was joined by Ken Holland, editor of *These Times*, and his wife, Maurine. How much we had to discuss about the future of our two missionary journals! Across the room I saw Kenneth Tilghman, former general manager of the *Review* and Herald Publishing Association, and stepped over to renew a friendship that had begun on an itinerary to Singapore and Indonesia many years ago. "I'm living a few miles north of Atlanta, Georgia," he told me, "teaching a Sabbath school class, conducting Bible studies, spending half time auditing church books throughout the conference. I'm doing everything that I've always wanted to do," he summed up happily.

Then I had to leave hurriedly—if one can leave anywhere hurriedly here. Everywhere you turn there is an old friend. Or a new friend to make.

Yesterday afternoon, at the call of Publishing Department Director Bruce Wickwire, I attended a special meeting for publishing workers. There must have been 50 or more of us there.

Louis Ramirez, publishing director of the Inter-American Division, reported that sales in his division during the last quinquennium had reached \$49 million, more than the combined sales for all the previous years to 1922.

We introduced ourselves all around the circle. Don Swan, of the Africa Herald Press, told us that he was "half-time manager and full-time lorry driver," then



went on to explain about the difficulties they have getting books into some nearby nations. For a year, he said, it had been impossible to get books into one country. Then, after much diplomacy, they got a government permit duly signed and sealed for "a load" of books to go into the country. "Nothing said how big the load could be," he said. So everyone at the publishing house worked for three months, overtime, Sundays, even Saturday nights after sunset. It still took two to three days to clear the formalities at the border—but that "load" weighed 30 tons! Not bad, Brother Swan!

### A momentous beginning

I scarcely had left the publishing meeting when it was time to find a place in the Arena. At six o'clock the fifty-third session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists would begin.

As the delegates streamed through the doors I noticed a profound change. The doorkeepers were not (as at most previous sessions) softhearted Adventist deacons who might be easily persuaded to let a nondelegate sit in the delegate section. They were Pinkerton's uniformed guards, and they weren't about to let *anyone* persuade them to deviate from duty! As I watched one visitor try to get in, a small, pretty female Pinkerton guard ordered him to *stop!* He stopped! Fortunately for him, as for other visitors, there were plenty of seats in the balcony. I sat counting them later and calculated close to 7,000 seats up there.

The Arena is a circle. A large platform had been set up, decorated tastefully with the motto "By His Spirit" standing out in large white reverse letters against the dusty-blue background.

The seats were already filling as I went in. How the singing under John Hancock's direction rose and swelled and filled this great hall!

The first session at any General Conference is always a business meeting. Besides the prayer and praise, there are legal matters that must be taken care of, and certain formalities to be observed.

Millions who wanted to be here could not be. But the congregation was thrilled when Clyde O. Franz, General

Conference secretary, announced that there was a delegation of three from Burma, the first time Burma had been represented at a General Conference since 1958. There also was a delegation of nine from Russia. Elder Franz told us there was still hope that a delegation would arrive from Cuba. Warm applause greeted these delegations as Elder Franz instructed them to take back to their fellow believers the greetings and love of this large assembly.

The heart of the meeting was, of course, the keynote message by Neal Wilson. It is what he said in this address that suggests that this session may well become a watershed in Adventist history.

As you read the condensed version of the talk as it appears in this issue, it will take you perhaps 20 to 30 minutes. Read by the president, with every word emphasized and many added, it took slightly more than an hour and a quarter. Again and again, the congregation broke into applause, especially the nondelegates in the balcony (which, by this time, was three quarters full). Sometimes it seemed that the nondelegates were more enthusiastic than the delegates. Apparently sensing this difference, near the end Elder Wilson said, "That's what I think ought to be done, and I thought you ought to know before the nominating meeting convenes tonight."

At that there was a spontaneous outbreak from all over, as if to say, "Go to it, Elder Wilson. Give us the leadership we need, and God bless you!"

Most of the nondelegates left when the speaker sat down, but there was still much business to do. With the rapid growth in Africa, it was proposed that the work there be realigned to make two new, wholly-African divisions. All this had to be explained, then voted. After this the nominating committee had to be appointed. If you think this first session was a long meeting, it was—nearly four hours in one sitting.

This morning [Friday], like other mornings, began with a devotional message. Be sure to read "The Source of the Message," by P. M. Mabena, and share the inspiration he brought the delegates from the letters to the seven churches of Revelation.

Then an announcement: There will be a special business session this afternoon at 3:45. I get up to find a



As W. J. Hackett, session chairman, declared Neal C. Wilson elected General Conference president, Elder Wilson's family joined him on the podium. At the left are his parents, Elder and Mrs. N. C. Wilson. At the right are his wife, Elinor; granddaughter, Emilie; and son, Ted.



In the Thanks-Giving Square ceremonies, Neal C. Wilson and C. O. Franz, retiring General Conference secretary, led out in prayer.

typewriter to write this story. As I'm rising, the announcer urges all who will be in the parade to meet promptly in the theater. There's that parade again. I wonder whether it will be as good as Elder Wood said it would be.

And then, as I reach the door I have one of those happy privileges that come with attending a General Conference. As I am about to leave, I recognize Elder and Mrs. H. M. S. Richards coming in. He asked me, "Where do the institutional delegates sit?" It was my happy privilege to usher this grand old man and his wonderful wife to a seat with a good view of the platform.

Typing frantically to meet the editorial deadline, I glance at my watch. Time for that glorious parade—if indeed it is all that wonderful. We've heard of publicity stunts like this before. They usually end up in a way that makes me feel that I'm not quite sure I want to be identified with them.

And while I'm walking up the stairs, someone says, "They just elected Neal Wilson president." How come they brought that nomination in so early?

I rush around trying to find someone to tell me how it happened. It must be included in the story of the day. At last Miriam Wood tells me all about it.

It seems that the nominating committee was so unanimous in their support for Elder Wilson that it reached its decision almost immediately. At the end of the treasurer's and secretary's reports, the microphone was given to the nominating committee chairman, H. H. Schmidt, who turned it over to the committee secretary, J. G. Smoot—and the minute he mentioned Elder Wilson as the nominee there was a movement in the audience as the assembled delegates rose to their feet in a spontaneous outbreak of love and approval. W. J. Hackett, session chairman, said he would take that response in lieu of a vote and declared Elder Wilson elected. It was a touching scene as Elder Hackett called up Mrs. Wilson to share this sacred moment with her husband. The next to express their love and support were his parents, Elder

and Mrs. N. C. Wilson, veterans of the Lord's work in many areas. Then son Ted, and his wife, Nancy—who carried up little Emilie. Catching sight of the new General Conference president, she called out—as any 21-month-old child might—"Grandpa!" which had to be rewarded with a grandfatherly kiss, to everyone's delight. It was a moment long to be remembered.

## The parade

Now it was time for the parade. And I must tell you, it was tremendous. Superbly organized. Victor Cooper, parade director, told me that the police had said they could give us only one lane to march in. But when they saw what was developing, they said, "For this, we must give you the whole right of way."

Eight police on motorcycles led the procession. Then the U.S. flag and the marching band of Southern Missionary College, smartly uniformed in brown and black, wearing dark cowboy hats, and stepping in perfect time. The Pathfinders were there, resplendent in their uniforms. And the delegates were there, hundreds upon hundreds of them in national costume. It was a sight to behold, an event to inspire, an occasion not soon to be forgotten. Walking abreast like the children of Israel in the wilderness, they stretched block after block for half a mile or more. And the people of the city stood on the sidewalks and watched, impressed.

The destination of the parade was a beautiful park called Thanks-Giving Square. Here artificial waterfalls are skillfully designed to increase the sound of the falling waters, so that their soothing melody blots out the noise of surrounding traffic.

In this lovely spot the marchers gathered, and here Elder Wilson led them in a service of thanksgiving. The Southern Missionary College band played again, a choir from Montemorelos University—dressed in rose and gray—led us in song, and representatives from ten overseas divisions thanked God publicly for His mercies in their lives.

This afternoon, beginning at 2:30, there has been a ministers' council on Faith-Action Advance conducted by the General Conference Ministerial Association. It is to continue all day Sabbath and Sunday morning.

These special meetings are designed to inspire the world church to praise the Lord for victories won, to lead the church into a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of itself, its message and mission, and the world it is to serve. Gottfried Oosterwal, director of the General Conference Institute of World Mission and chairman of the Department of World Mission at the Seminary, opened the council with a slide presentation detailing a realistic picture of the Adventist Church in the world today. Although some 850 people are converted to the Adventist faith each day, 250,000 persons are born every day. There is a great work for the church to do.

In a few minutes the Sabbath will begin. What a high day it promises to be. Be sure to read about it in tomorrow's Day in Dallas. □

# Formula for change

Sabbath morning sermon presented April 19, 1980.

By C. E. BRADFORD  
General Conference  
Vice-President for  
North America



“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ‘Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.”’

“‘For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever’” (Jer. 7:1-7, R.S.V.).

The reaction comes out almost forced through clenched teeth. “All these prophets seem to have this exaggerated sense of sin. They magnify our faults. They confront us and challenge us; they chide us and expose us; they even ridicule us. We can’t escape them, try as we may. They refuse to let us be. They give us no quarter; they allow us no refuge. Even in our religious life, they force us to admit that our practice is not up to our profession, and our performance is not equal to our promise. They hunt us and hound us. Like a hair shirt, they make us feel so uncomfortable. Their observations are cutting and incisive; their words are biting and stinging. Do they have to be so blunt, so plain, so direct? Why can’t they talk about our psyches and blame things on our neuroses, make their preaching more relevant, more with it: we can’t be all that bad. Don’t they know that this continual putting-down is damaging to our national ego? This is not good pastoral psychology at all. These prophets, why can’t they leave us alone? They never tell us about our virtues or even recognize our good points. They all seem to be saying the same thing.

“Just the other day Jeremiah, the gloomy, weepy one, stood at the gate of the Temple on our high day, a solemn feast day, as we were on our way to worship Yahweh,

and told us that there was no use; it was all worthless. We were deceiving ourselves, he said, and all the time we were on our way to worship with our sacrifices and offerings.

“If he meant to shock us, he surely did, and he always claims to speak for Yahweh. ‘Yahweh says’—this is the way he always begins. You can’t make me believe that Yahweh is like that. Why, He is kind and longsuffering and full of love and compassion. I can’t believe He would ever reject His people. Did not He call us in the desert? And don’t we have Abraham for our father? And this magnificent Temple, our wonderful tradition and history? Even Jeremiah cannot discount all of this. Does he think he can sweep it away with a wave of his hand?”

One thing Paul Tillich said is true: “It is not because it is too profound, but rather it is too uncomfortable, that we shy away from truth.” There is something in us that does not like the words of a prophet. We will use any pretext to avoid encounter with that searching word. But God knows that this is precisely what we need.

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12, R.S.V.).

## Persistent messengers

And so He sends His messengers persistently, earnestly, day after day. Their reluctance is overcome by the irresistible compunction of the Holy Spirit. The Word is fire in their bones.

Jeremiah brooded long and sought to forbear, but he could not stay. The burden would not lift until the word was spoken. Finally he stepped out of the shadow of his reluctance and went public. He took his place at the Temple gate and his life literally in his hands. The die was cast. Come what may, he would be God’s man, His faithful spokesman to root up, to tear down, to plant, and to build.

Unmoved by censure, uncorrupted by applause, undetracted by difficulty, “with infinite courage he flings down his challenge before the king, the priests, the prophets, and the people” (*Interpreter’s Bible*).\*

“Christianity is not romantic, not soft,” says Francis Shaeffer. “It is tough fibered and realistic, and the Bible gives us the realistic message that Jeremiah preached in his own days, a message I am convinced the church today must preach if it is to be any help in the post-Christian world.”—*Death in the City*, p. 26.

The prophets stress the primacy of the Word. “Give them the entire message; don’t leave out one word” (Jer. 26:2, T.L.B.).† Our safety, our prosperity, even our ultimate salvation, depends upon the nature and quality of our response to that Word. The prophets know that we are too easily deluded. We are entranced, bewitched, and

\* From Stanley R. Hopper, in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 5, p. 869. Used by permission of Abingdon Press.

† From *The Living Bible*, copyright 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

fascinated by illusions, phantoms, the will-o'-the-wisp. Israel's foolish conduct made this so patently clear that Jeremiah remarked with biting sarcasm: "'Vanity they pursued, vanity they became'" (Jer. 2:5, *Jerusalem Bible*).<sup>‡</sup>

Before Israel could see reality these myths had to be exploded, these illusions had to be punctured—and with the Word. First of all, the people could not be left to believe that sacrifice could take the place of obedience. "'Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you'" (chap. 7:21-23, R.S.V.).

Jeremiah found himself in the strange position of attacking not only the people's sins but their very religion. Somehow over the years they had been led to look at the sacrificial system as the *summum bonum* of religion, completely satisfying the demands of Yahweh. The cultus, or the cult, systematic organized religion, had become the desired end in itself. They had completely lost sight of the fact that it was the covenant that made them the people of God. The sacrificial system was simply a penitential reminder of their sins, that they had broken the covenant relationship by disobeying the voice of God. As Hosea puts it, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice" (chap. 6:6, R.S.V.). Indeed all the great prophets agreed with what Samuel said: "'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams'" (1 Sam. 15:22, R.S.V.).

Jeremiah felt compelled to declare that Israel had been faithless and obdurate to the demands of the law, deaf to the voice of the prophets. The prophets' warnings only resulted in increased cultic activity, more sacrifices, more elaborate ritual, more feverish activity on Israel's part until Yahweh cried out, "Enough! I will have no more sacrifice. Bring me a repentant heart, a heart that is willing to obey."

The essence of Deuteronomic theology is the prophetic proclamation of the law. As a people, we have been called to preach the law—not as petty morality, but as the basis of the covenant. The last message to the world is about the law, to show the importance that God attaches to His law. Not a new, more rigid, orthodoxy, but a new, more vital, heart relationship.

Jeremiah drew heavily from the book of Deuteronomy, the book of the law. Biblical scholars tell us that the heart of the Deuteronomic law is, not legal enactment, but a pleading for the generous heart. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deut. 5:29).

Does Jeremiah have anything to say to us today? I believe that he does. At a time when there is a new religiosity abroad and all manner of people unabashedly proclaim their "born again" status, Jeremiah's corrective word is needed: "'Obey my voice, and I will be your God . . . ; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you'" (chap. 7:23, R.S.V.).

## Obedience is not legalism

To insist on obedience to God's law is not legalism. We must not quail before the charge that we are legalists. Only when law is made a method of salvation, instead of the standard that God declared it to be, does legalism obtain. That obedience from the heart that is the fruit of the union of the soul with God is to be highly prized. "Religion"—charismatic experiences, visions, dreams, ecstatic speech—can never take the place of doing the will of God. Obedience to God's commandments always has been and always will be the hallmark of loyalty.

There is a popular misconception that religious shibboleths give magical protection. "'Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' . . . Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail'" (verses 4-8, R.S.V.).

We would like to think that, having memorized the words, the proper texts, the formulas, we are safe. Israel took the promise of God as being unconditional. They took for granted their relationship to Him as His favorite children. The presence of the sanctuary and the Temple, they felt, gave them blanket security. There is always danger that the promises of God will be misconstrued as a magical guarantee against even His judgments. In Jeremiah's day belief in the inviolability of the Temple had hardened into a dogma. "We have the truth, we are God's remnant—nothing can harm us." Secure in this kind of confidence, Israel marched blindly on to disaster.

Does Jeremiah have something to say to us today? I think so. There can be no dispute over the fact that we have the truth. Our doctrinal structure is impeccable. It is nothing short of miraculous that a little band of humble New England farmers, with only the Bible in hand, could bring from the mine of truth and the field of inspiration a system of theology, the basic framework of which remains intact until this day. I never cease to marvel. This has given us remarkable stability, yet it brings with it at the same time a danger—that we come to believe that our safety and strength is in the mere formulation of doctrine and dogmas.

Knowing that we have the "message," the "truth," could even foster a certain conceit that God is unconditionally committed to the defense of institutions and organizations. Thinking this leads to a subtle attempt to manipulate God and bring Him over to our side.

Then there is the pathetic search for a more satisfying formula, a new theological construct, or even a return to a past one, which if resurrected and properly spelled out

<sup>‡</sup> From *The Jerusalem Bible*, copyright © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., and Doubleday and Company, Inc. Used by permission of the publishers.

will "finish the work." We need no new theological construct. What we do need is a vital new contact with the living God. "The eternal God is thy refuge" (Deut. 33:27). Not a new theology, but a new heart, a renewed heart, is our greatest need.

H. L. Ellison, in his penetrating study *The Prophets of Israel*, touches the heart of the matter when he says, "All the discussion on the theological doctrine of righteousness will not necessarily lead a man to live righteously, and the reiterated proclamation of righteousness by faith is no guarantee that the hearers, in spite of their intellectual assent, enter into the gift God offered them."—Pages 68, 69.

There is another fatal illusion, the concept that the worship of God can be divorced from right conduct and right relationships with our fellow men. "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will let you dwell in this place. . . . If you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever" (Jer. 7:3-7, R.S.V.).

### The horizontal dimension

The Hebrew prophets introduced a radical new concept, or dimension, into the ancient religious world, the horizontal. There is an indissoluble connection between the way we love God and the way we love our neighbor. Ernest T. Campbell reminds us that "to tune a television set properly one must adjust both the vertical hold and horizontal hold buttons. For the church to beam a full and representative picture of Christ to the world she must be vertically alive to God and horizontally in touch with men and all that troubles them."—*Christian Manifesto*, p. 7.

After exhorting the church to read Isaiah 58, Ellen White quotes this passage and observes, "This is the special work now before us. All our praying and abstinence from food will avail nothing unless we resolutely lay hold of this work."—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 30.

"It is not the abundance of your meetings that God accepts. It is not the numerous prayers, but the rightdoing, doing the right thing at the right time."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 36.

Ellen White also makes this tender personal appeal to church members: "Pray that He will give you a heart of flesh, a heart that can feel the sorrows of others, that can be touched with human woe. Pray that He will give you a heart that will not permit you to turn a deaf ear to the widow or the fatherless. Pray that you may have bowels of mercy for the poor, the infirm, and the oppressed. Pray that you may love justice and hate robbery, and make no difference in the bestowal of your favors, except to consider the cases of the needy and the unfortunate. Then the promises recorded in Isaiah 58 will be fulfilled to you."—*Welfare Ministry*, pp. 83, 84.

American presidents like to characterize their administrations by high-sounding slogans such as the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the Great Society. The church must be in deed and in reality the Just Society. The principles of justice and neighbor love must be worked out in the laboratory of human experience, in the here-and-now. And we are the ones to demonstrate these grand principles. Let Micah's word burn into our consciousness, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (chap. 6:8, R.S.V.).

Still another phantom must be cleared away, the misconception that one can worship God without really knowing Him. Throughout the book of Jeremiah there are echoes of the covenant. Jeremiah harked back again and again to Sinai, the time when God came graciously

### *I wish it were morning*

By H. D. JOHNSON

[This poem, written by Elder Johnson, one of the retiring assistant treasurers of the General Conference, was presented at worship for the headquarters staff several weeks before the Dallas session.]

*In from the field at the close of day,  
With a tired groan and a sigh.  
The sun was aglow with bright-red ray,  
Hanging low in the western sky.*

*We, with Granddad, had labored for hours  
In the field of new-mown hay,  
Working in spite of both sun and showers,  
And now—at the close of the day—*

*We said to him, "Grandpa, you're tired,  
You've carried great loads today, sir.  
You harnessed the horses, the fence you wired;  
You are not as young as you were."*

*Granddad stood up tall and faced us straight.  
He looked with an experienced eye  
At the field all green with new-mown hay,  
He saw that the harvest was nigh.*

*"I'm not tired," he said as he left  
To check on the ripening grain.  
"I just wish that now it were morning so  
We could go out and start again."*

*And some of us feel the same today  
In the glow of the western sky,  
Looking upon the ripening grain  
And seeing earth's harvest is nigh.*

*We're not really tired as we turn to go  
And think of the sun and the rain.  
We just wish that now it were morning—  
We could go out and start again.*

near and denominated Israel His people: ““Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people.” . . . But they did not obey or incline their ear. . . . From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day; yet they did not listen to me, or incline their ear’” (chap. 7:23-26, R.S.V.).

Under the terms of the covenant God revealed Himself to Israel as a Father, a tenderhearted, personal God, who cannot be replicated by any man-made image or human art form. He was to be known by His character.

“‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty’” (Ex. 34:6, 7, R.S.V.).

### God above history

His ultimate self-revelation is in His Word. If we do not accept this testimony we shall be left to the gods of our own making—culture, science, mammon, and humanism. Only the God of the Hebrews is adequate; He alone is equal to history and above history. To know Him is to be in a saving, covenant relationship with Him. “‘And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent’” (John 17:3, R.S.V.).

If it is true that the world suffers more from a misapprehension of the character of God than anything else, then it becomes all the more important that we present Him to the world fully and accurately, without ancient or modern distortions.

A contemporary theologian aptly puts it: “Of course, Jesus did not want to proclaim anything like an ambiguous private God or an indeterminate pseudo-modern belief in God: that unassuming God of bourgeois mediocrity who corresponds exactly to our very selective, favorite moral ideas, having no disturbing features and making no inconvenient demands; a God who simply takes people as they are and allows them to continue in their selfish ways; who is more than satisfied when we acknowledge his existence and who will never hurt

anyone, since he understands and therefore pardons everything. In brief, this is a God who harms no one and is useful to no one, but also thus makes possible a kind of ‘religion’ which disturbs nothing and imposes no obligation.”—Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 295, 296.

What Jeremiah said in his great Temple sermon was that God would not accept the status quo. We may come to Him just as we are, but we cannot remain that way. The prophet’s word is always a specific directive for a specific situation. Here is his formula for change: “‘Amend your ways and your doings.’” Get off dead center. Positive action is necessary; reformation is in order. Previous reforms in Jeremiah’s day had been shallow and only cosmetic. But the current situation called for something deeper. “‘Break up your fallow ground’” (Jer. 4:3). “‘The time had come for deep heart-searching.’”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 415. The prophet encouraged the people “to lay the foundations of their spiritual life broad and deep, by making thorough work of repentance. . . . They were urged to begin building wisely . . . , using as foundation material the pure gold, the refined silver, the precious stones—faith and obedience and good works—which alone are acceptable in the sight of a holy God” (*ibid.*, pp. 409, 410). The change that the prophets call for is based on a vital new relationship, a complete reorientation of life. We must not wait for some sweeping tide of emotion to lift us from the sandbars of indifference and inactivity. Ellen White prods us, “My brethren and sisters, do you desire to break the spell that holds you? Would you arouse from this sluggishness that resembles the torpor of death? Go to work, whether you feel like it or not.”—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 103. God’s formula for change is to break up the dull, tame monotony of our religious labor and to take on a deep, earnest, sanctified zeal. Paul’s description should fit us: “a . . . people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Interest always follows action. It must be said again, conscious and positive action is necessary to get us off dead center.

It is true that the enemies of God are activated. The final attack on the remnant is already mounted. We have been warned that everything that can be shaken will be



The nine-member Russian delegation brought special translation equipment with them from Russia. Mrs. George Knowles, right, translates.

shaken. "Legal religion will not answer for this age."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 417. Practical godliness is the only answer. "There is danger of our workers depending upon human agents, upon facilities, and great preparations for work, and losing their firm faith in God, in making every outward show of prosperity, while the work in the heart is neglected. . . . Danger is on every hand, and we need to be constantly depending upon God."—*This Day With God*, p. 80. The shibboleths will not do; there is no safety in crying, "We have the truth." The outward forms and ceremonies cannot bring peace to the soul. There is no substitute for genuine neighbor love. The prophet's words hurt us and hound us; they bring us face to face with realities and leave us without excuse.

What, finally, shall we say  
In the last moment  
When we will be confronted  
By the Unimaginable,  
The One  
Who could not be measured  
Or contained  
In space or time,  
Who was Love  
Unlimited?

What shall we answer  
When the question is asked  
About our undeeds  
Committed  
In His name—  
In the name of Him  
For whose sake we promised  
To have courage,  
To abandon everything?

Shall we say  
That we didn't know—  
That we couldn't hear the clatter  
Of hearts breaking—  
Millions of them—  
In lonely rooms, in alleys and prisons  
And in bars?

Shall we explain  
That we thought it mattered  
That buildings were constructed  
And maintained  
In His honor—  
That we were occupied  
With the arrangements  
Of hymns and prayers  
And the proper, the responsible way  
Of doing things?

Shall we tell Him  
That we had to take care  
Of the orderly definition of dogmas  
So that there was no time

To listen to the sobbing  
Of little ones  
Huddled in corners,  
Or the silent despair  
Of those already beyond sobbing?

Or shall we say this, too:  
That we were afraid—  
That we were keeping busy with all this  
To avoid confrontation  
With the reality of His meaning  
Which would lead us to repentance—  
That it was fear which kept us  
Hiding in church pews  
And in important boards and committees  
When He went by?

—Ursula Solek, quoted in *Christian Manifesto*.§

There is much discussion on the state of the church these days. All kinds of studies and inquiries are being made. Many reasons and explanations are put forth as to why our growth is so stunted, our progress so slow, even so glacial. We have almost become bogged down in the paralysis of analysis. Could it be that some cherished idol, some lack of commitment, an unwillingness to hear and be corrected by the voice of stern rebuke, is our real problem? Ellen White talked about the painful work of detachment that must take place before one can be attached to Jesus Christ.

In 31 B.C. Octavius defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in one of the great sea battles of history. Why the superior forces of Antony and Cleopatra lost is still much disputed. Legend has it that Antony's flagship unaccountably slowed down in the midst of the battle and, in spite of the feverish efforts of a hundred oarsmen and the favorable winds that filled the sails, soon came to a halt. According to the Greeks, a diver was sent overboard to examine the ship, and he came up with a little fish that had attached itself to the hull. It was believed that that dread little fish held back the mightiest vessel simply by clinging to it. It is just a legend, but the lesson is clear.

There is something that we can do. We can and must detach from whatever it is that slows down our personal spiritual progress and slackens the forward thrust of the good ship Zion. Every habit and practice must be squared with the divine counsel. We must not neglect a word.

The only course we can take is to amend our ways and actions. It must begin in my house before it can be effective in God's house. The altars must be rebuilt with appropriate stones—repentance, faith, love, good works. This will bring us in touch with the Source of all power. All that potential energy, those latent talents, will spring to life. And the good ship Zion will surge forward with power, unencumbered and unfettered, an unconquerable force, accomplishing the purposes of her Lord. □

§ Reprinted by permission. *Presbyterian Life*.

# Dramatic new painting exalts Christ

By RON GRAYBILL

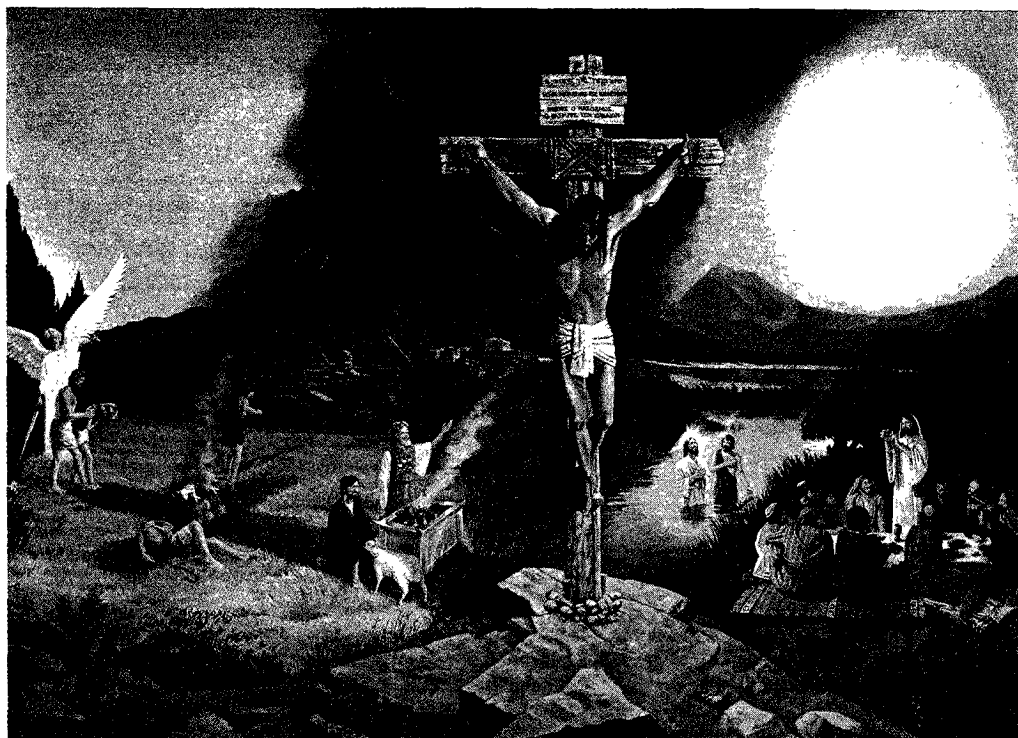
A giant mural depicting the plan of salvation has intrigued most visitors to the Ellen G. White Estate exhibit at this General Conference session. Entitled "Christ, the Way of Life," the mural was adapted from a steel-plate engraving that Ellen White commissioned in 1883.

Christ on the cross dominates the mural, which depicts the major events in Bible history, including the expulsion from Eden, the murder of Abel, the Old Testament sacrificial system, the baptism of Christ, and the Last Supper. In the background looms Mount Sinai and the Holy City.

When Dr. Merritt Kellogg first showed James White an old lithograph called "The Way of Life, From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored," Elder White became interested immediately. He issued his revision of the picture in 1876. In that picture, a tree with two main branches and five smaller branches depicted the law of God looming high above the cross of Christ, which was slightly to the right of the tree.

Before he died, Elder White mentioned in letters to his family that he wanted to remove the tree in order to

*Ron Graybill is an assistant secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.*



The giant mural, "Christ, the Way of Life," is on display at the White Estate exhibit at this GC session.

place the cross of Christ at the center of the scene. After his death in 1881, Ellen and her sons, Edson and Willie, carried out the father's plan, and Ellen White copyrighted the new steel-plate engraving in 1883. This was five years before the 1888 General Conference session, therefore

lending credibility to Ellen White's statements that she and her husband had held the major views expounded in Minneapolis before that time.

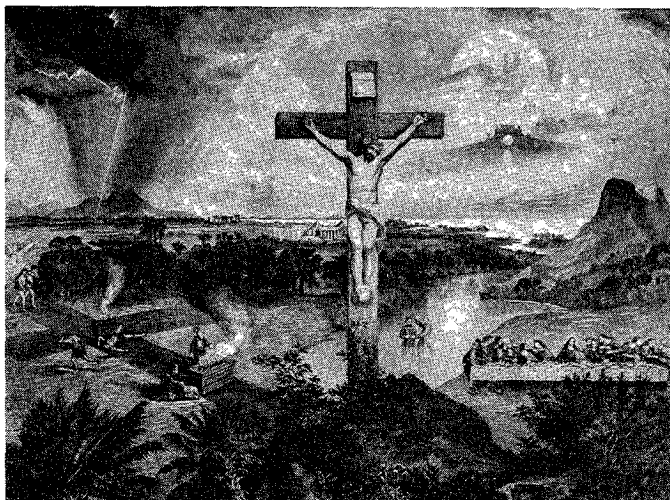
In the spring of 1980 the White Estate staff commissioned Adventist Artist Elfred Lee to render the "Way of Life" theme once again. Mr. Lee spent three months of prayer and hard work on the painting. He devoted much research to the project, redesigning the elements, and adding such authentic touches as the seating of the disciples at the Last Supper, on cushions and carpets rather than on chairs. Mount Sinai and the Jordan River are modeled after color photographs made by Mr. Lee in the Holy Land.

The angel casting our first parents from Eden has lowered his sword while he points the guilty pair toward the cross. The priest also points penitent sinners to the cross. Cain, having slain his brother, Abel, slinks away toward the pagan civilizations of Babylon, Egypt, and Greece, of which he is the symbolic forerunner.

One of the most beautiful vignettes in the scene is the baptism of Jesus. A subtle beam of light descends from the Holy City. John the Baptist is overwhelmed with amazement, and seems to be saying, "Here truly is the Son of God; He should have baptized me!"

Following Ellen White's lead, Mr. Lee devoted a special labor of love on the depiction of the cross. There Christ, younger and stronger than He sometimes appears, shows the signs of torture, anguish, and lack of rest. One pierced hand is clenched in pain, the other painfully reaches out to God. "Christ," says Mr. Lee, "is the ladder between heaven and earth. The painting is designed in such a way that wherever the viewer stands, he has the feeling of being at the foot of the cross, with nothing between."

After the General Conference session, the painting will be on continuous display at the offices of the Ellen G. White Estate in Washington, D.C.



This steel-plate engraving, copyrighted by Ellen White in 1883, is the inspiration for the mural recently painted by Artist Elfred Lee.



# First business meeting

Fifty-third General Conference session  
April 17, 1980, 6:00 P.M.

## Session proceedings

J. R. SPANGLER: We welcome you to the fifty-third session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. One hundred years ago this church held its nineteenth annual General Conference session on the Battle Creek campground. It was a one-day meeting. President James White welcomed 38 delegates, representing 21 conferences and five missions. The nominating committee was composed of only three members. We have come a long way, haven't we?

B. L. ARCHBOLD, president of the Inter-American Division, will announce our opening hymn, W. J. HACKETT, a general vice-president, will have our opening prayer. Francis W. Wernick, a general vice-president, will introduce the rest of the program.

B. L. ARCHBOLD: Let us sing number 40, "There Shall Be Showers of Blessings."

W. J. HACKETT: Let us reverently bow our heads.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, it is with reverence, admiration, and thankfulness that we approach Thy throne with praise and petition this evening. We praise Thy name for bringing us all together, for traveling mercies, for the fellowship of the world Adventist family, and for the bond of unity and love that ties us together in Christ Jesus, our Elder Brother. We praise Thee, O Lord, for Thy great salvation, the gracious provision of Jesus' perfect life, His substitutionary death, and His glorious resurrection. We praise and thank Thee for the great family of God around the world—people of different languages, cultures, and colors, all one in Christ Jesus. That family, Lord, is represented here tonight by more than 2,000 delegates and by thousands of members. Grace this assembly with a double portion of Thy Spirit as we, Thy people, assemble here to worship Thee and to fulfill the commission given to the disciples long ago. Speak through each of us, Lord, to a world in great need tonight.

We are reminded, too, Father, that the prophets have said, "The

most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Bless the nations and rulers of earth, we pray. Hold open the doors of freedom, Lord, until this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Bless this nation in whose territory we are meeting, and its president. Bless this city and its government.

Bless our church president, Elder Wilson, tonight, as he brings a message to us. Give him more than human wisdom, we pray. Speak through his lips as Thou hast in times past. And when this meeting has ended, may we realize that the power of Thy Spirit has been in our midst. Move upon every heart, that we may rededicate our lives in consecration and love to Thee. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

F. W. WERNICK: Your presence here tonight from nearly every nation on earth is evidence of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is a visible witness that the proclamation of a worldwide message as shown to John, recorded in Revelation 14, is being fulfilled.

Ralph Thompson, vice-president of the General Conference, will ask for the offering.

RALPH THOMPSON: [Offertory prayer.]

F. W. WERNICK: C. O. Franz, secretary of the General Conference, will read the official call for the session.

C. O. FRANZ: (Read the official call as published three times in the *Adventist Review*—November 22, November 29, and December 6, 1979.) Article 3, Section 3-A, of the Constitution provides that all members of the General Conference Executive Committee shall be delegates at large to the session. The present membership of this committee is 369, of whom 331 are present tonight.

Article 3, Section 3-C, of the Constitution provides that four delegates at large shall be appointed from each division without regard to membership, and one additional delegate for each 200,000 members or major fraction thereof. The divisions have appointed a total of 50 delegates

under this provision, of whom 40 have already registered.

Article 3, Section 4, of the Constitution provides for the appointment of regular delegates by union conferences and divisions, and 932 such delegates have been accredited by their respective organizations. This number, added to the 331 delegates at large who are members of the General Conference Committee and the 40 delegates at large appointed to represent the division organizations, make a total of 1,303 delegates present.

F. W. WERNICK: The majority of the delegates appointed to represent the world church are present; therefore I declare the fifty-third session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists open for business.

C. O. FRANZ: Brother Chairman, there is a further group of delegates present. Article 3, Section 3-B, of the Constitution provides for the appointment of delegates representing General Conference institutions, departments, and other interests of the church, not to exceed 25 percent of the total number of delegates otherwise provided for. We bring you the recommendation of the General Conference that 361 delegates be seated under this Constitutional provision.

I move that we ratify the credentials of these delegates. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

C. O. FRANZ: Brother Chairman, one other item of business is the election of the four standing committees that serve the session. You will find a list of the proposed membership on pages 28 and 29 of your programs. I move that we approve this list as a whole. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

F. W. WERNICK: John Hancock will now introduce a special music feature.

JOHN HANCOCK: Marshall Kelly, Bible teacher at Oakwood Academy, will bring us a spiritual message in music.

MARSHALL T. KELLY: Song, "The Unveiled Christ."

F. W. WERNICK: We are meeting tonight in the North American Division, the Southwestern Union, the Southwestern Region Conference, and the Texas Conference. The presidents of each of these organizations will welcome the delegates and guests.

C. E. BRADFORD: Mr. Chairman, president, delegates, they tell me you have come from 119 nations, from all the continents of earth, and many islands of the sea. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to extend to you a

warm welcome on behalf of your brothers and sisters in North America—the United States of America, Canada, and the crown colony of Bermuda. We have looked forward with keen anticipation and great expectancy to this day for half a decade. It is but a foretaste of the fellowship that we will enjoy for all eternity in the kingdom of God.

B. E. LEACH (wearing a ten-gallon stetson hat): It's a great pleasure to welcome you to the great Southwest, land of warmth, land of plenty, land of beauty, and land of enchantment—Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana.

The work of God is on the move here in the great Southwest. We now have 38,500 members in 325 churches.

Did you know that Ellen White and her husband, James, once came to Texas, planning to spend a few days? They, especially James, liked it so well that they stayed five months, living with a young licensed minister by the name of A. G. Daniells, who nursed Elder White back to good health. Then they traveled about holding meetings. The membership was just 150 when they came. When they left five months later, it was 300!

Our prayer is that God will bless us all. I love this church with all my heart, friends, and I hope that right here under the blessing of God, we will see the best plans laid that this church has ever seen. I want to see the work of God finished. I want to go home to heaven.

W. C. JONES: Mr. Chairman, president, delegates assembled, it is with a great deal of pleasure that we extend to you a cordial welcome to Dallas, where is located the headquarters of the great Southwest Region Conference, with more than 8,000 members and 65 churches. We would like you to know that our hearts are as big as our hats. We are happy that you have come to our city for this great world conference.

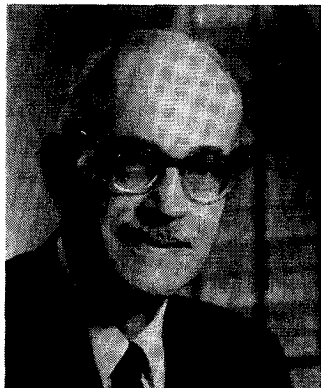
CYRIL MILLER: Howdy, y'all! The Texas Conference extends a Texas-sized welcome and a big bouquet of yellow roses to all delegates and friends assembled here tonight. Actually, several cultures occupy our giant territory, lingering vestiges of the bygone days when six Federal flags in succession were unfurled in our breezes. We cherish the belief that God will draw very near to us as His people while we are assembled here in this fifty-third General Conference session. Now, will the

*Continued on page 26*

# The last great sign

Devotional message  
presented  
Friday evening,  
April 18, 1980.

By H. M. S.  
RICHARDS, SR.  
*Speaker Emeritus  
The Voice of Prophecy*



The last great sign of the second coming of Christ is to my mind the most important of all the signs of the times, that is, of the signs that precede the return of our Lord to this earth. It is recorded in Luke's Gospel. Jesus said: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (chap. 21:25-27).

As we all know, practically all of these signs have appeared, and some are evident in the world. We know that the sun sign took place on May 19, 1780, when the bright morning sun was darkened on a clear day. We know that the star sign occurred on November 13, 1833, when the most stupendous star shower of all history startled millions. This is forecast also in Revelation the sixth chapter, verse 13. We know, too, that the distress sign has spread over the nations, with two great world wars in one generation, and other grave fears hanging over our heads today.

We know that these signs have appeared, and that of a surety the Lord's coming is at hand. It is imminent in the sense that it is the next great world-shaking, history-changing, vast, and universal change and transformation that awaits the whole human race.

But there is to be another sign, in my view, greater than all these we have mentioned—greater in extent, greater in importance, greater in interest to each one of us. The last great sign!

What is it? Let us see if we cannot find at least a suggestion as to what it is in the prophecy of the apostle Peter. We find it in the second epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verses 3 and 4: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? [or as other translations put it: "Where is his promised coming?"] for since the fathers fell asleep, all things

continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Here is something unusual: Such widespread scoffing and jeering at the promise of Christ's coming that it is recorded in the divine prophecy of Scripture, in the words of one of the 12 apostles, as a sign of the last days. Now, if almost universal opposition to the promise of Christ's return is to arise, we ask, What makes it arise? What is the cause of universal opposition to the promise of Christ's return? The answer is, of course, that only one thing could cause such opposition to arise—namely, a great worldwide agitation on the subject of Christ's second coming. It takes a worldwide preaching to arouse a worldwide reaction of scoffing and opposition. Not only that, it takes a worldwide proclamation of the promise and the certainty and the nature of the second coming of Christ to rouse a worldwide scoffing regarding the promise of Christ's second coming. And that's exactly what our Lord declares will actually take place: the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom—the gospel, the wonderful news of man's salvation. The story—the message of the cross in the light of the kingdom.

When Christ comes in power and glory He sits on the throne of His glory, and this takes place at His second coming, according to Matthew 25:31-34. So just before our Saviour returns to this earth there is to be a worldwide proclamation that His return is certain and real and imminent.

As John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ's first advent in the small land of Judea, so just before His second coming a class of gospel preachers will announce that great event as imminent to the wide, wide world. Here are the Saviour's words in Matthew 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then [as soon as this is done, no doubt when it is going with great power] shall the end come." The end shall come—the end of history as we know it, and the beginning of God's great intervention in the affairs of the human race.

## Witness borne to all nations

Christ does not say that all men or nations will accept the gospel of the kingdom, but He says that the witness will be borne to all nations, preached in all nations, proclaimed worldwide. Yes, that is what the Word declares, that they will have the witness borne to them. So this worldwide witnessing, preaching of the gospel in the light of the setting of Christ's worldwide kingdom of glory, is the last great sign. The gospel in the light of the coming kingdom of glory includes the good news of the coming King in His glory!

In Matthew 25:31 we read: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Notice, it is when Christ comes in His glory that He sits upon the throne. The throne and the kingdom go together. He sits upon the throne of grace now; then upon the throne of

glory. These are two phases of Christ's kingdom. It is when He comes in glory that the kingdom of glory begins—and may that glad day hasten.

In perfect agreement with this is the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 (Weymouth's Translation): "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed throughout the whole world to set the evidence before all the Gentiles; and then the end will come."

In the fourteenth chapter of Revelation we find another last-day prophecy. It is this last great sign, and it too is a prophecy of Jesus Himself, taken down and written out by the apostle John on the island of Patmos. It is a threefold message and describes the closing message as a proclamation of the gospel to be delivered to the world just before the return of Jesus, for as soon as it is given, the beloved apostle John sees the Lord's second coming, describing it in these words: "I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle" (verse 14).

This last message of the gospel is to be preached in and to all the earth. To make this clear we read in verse 6: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

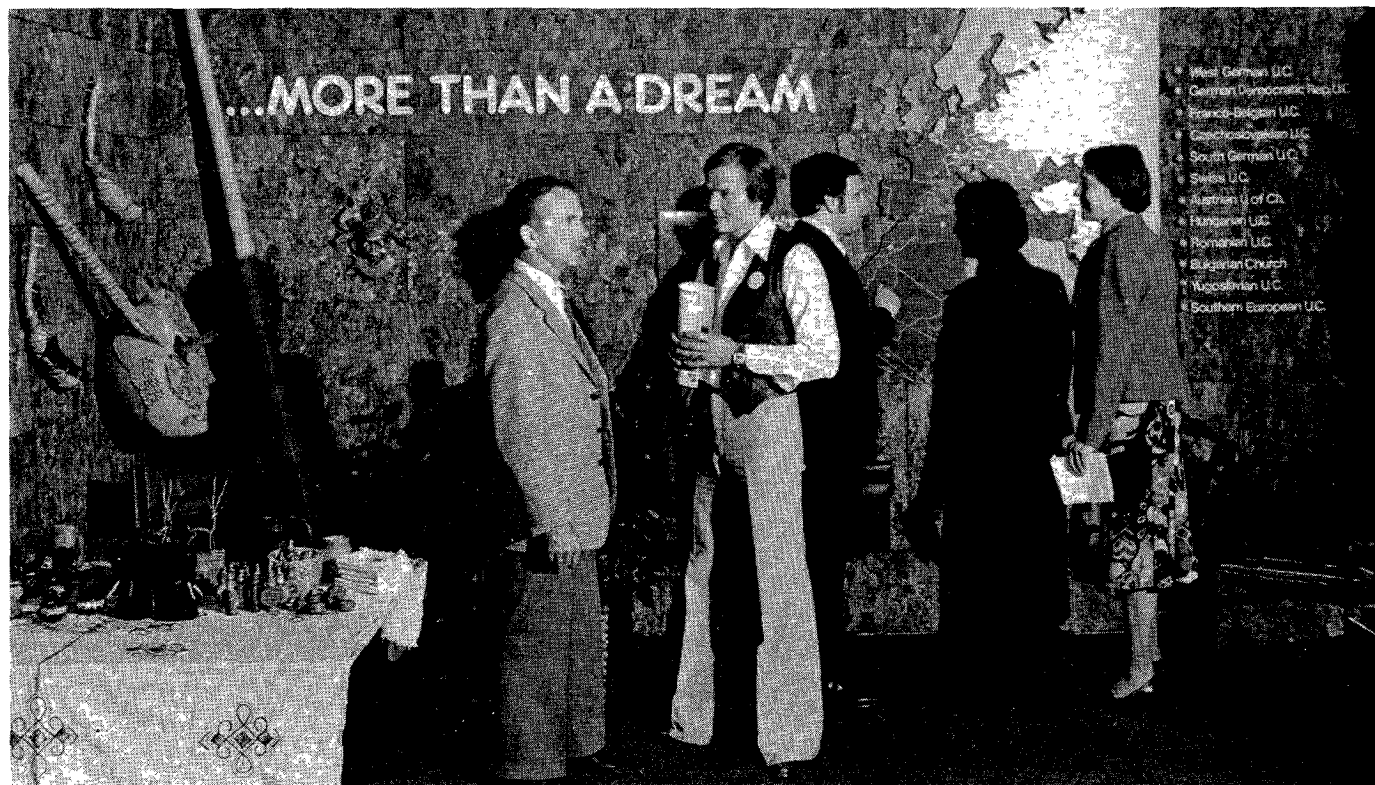
So, you see, before the Lord comes the second time there will be an announcement of His coming made to all the earth. It will be the very fullness of the gospel of Christ, the "everlasting gospel," and at the same time it will be the gospel of the kingdom. And, friends, in

fulfillment of these prophecies of Holy Scripture, there has been during the past century such an opening of doors as was never known before in all the history of the church.

This preparation for the advance of the gospel really began in the Reformation. Then came the nineteenth-century inventions and explorations that opened the world doors to the gospel. When the way was prepared for a quick work, the great movement of gospel mission began—on time! This is one of the wonders of the world.

In preparation for our Lord's first coming, many thousands of men who had no knowledge of it or interest in it were employed by God's providence. The world was under one government. One language was understood by scholars everywhere. A great system of hard-surface roads reached out from the city of Rome to the ends of civilization. The old pagan religions were dying, and multitudes were hungry for some word of hope. For such a time of general world preparation, God chose a man, John the Baptist, to announce the coming of Christ.

Now in these latter days, world explorations, the wonders of rapid transit and communication, general education, the high-speed printing press, radio, television, the great Bible societies, and the century of world missions have prepared the world for the final proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to all the world. So God has raised up not only the message but the messengers, and the inventions and modernizations that began in 1800 and have increased unto our day have made it possible to carry a mighty message to earth's remotest bounds, and quickly.



The Euro-Africa Division booth, with a map showing the territory in that division, is one of 11 division booths on the mezzanine level.

In 1800, about the time when the great modern age of increased knowledge began, a great revival of religion and of interest in Bible prophecy began, and reached a climax around 1844, when thousands expected the return of Christ. When the time passed and Christ did not come, the resulting disappointment was great. Many gave up interest in religion, and many more gave up all hope of Christ's literal return. But there were others who were convinced that, while the end of the prophetic periods had not brought them to the advent of Christ, it had reached to the beginning of the great preparation for His second coming.

This worldwide preparation for a quick work on earth is evident on all sides. So it is today that hundreds of thousands are giving their labor, their money, their sons and daughters, and sometimes all they have for the finishing of God's gospel message in all the world.

Amos said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Before the great flood of Noah's day, God commissioned Noah to warn the world and point out a way of escape. Before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent angels to warn the people and to guide Lot to a place of safety. Before the threatened doom of Nineveh, God sent Jonah to preach to its people that they might repent and avoid disaster. Before Jerusalem was destroyed, Christ and His apostles foretold its ruin and directed the Christian disciples how and when to flee (Matt. 24:15-20). Now, just before Christ's glorious second coming, Bible prophecy declares that the everlasting gospel will be broadcast "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," with the startling announcement: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6, 7). This identifies the worldwide message that is the last great sign, because in verse 14 we read of the coming of Christ immediately following the completion of the threefold message in all the world.

### Commandment-keeping saints

Now, what sort of people will be developed by this worldwide message that prepares the world for the second coming of Christ? We find them described in verse 12: "Here is the patience [or endurance] of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Where are they? They are here, that is, wherever this message goes. Although many who bear the name of Christ deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, His resurrection, and His glorious return, God will raise up a people among all races who believe all the foundation truths of the apostolic church. They will not be modernists. They will have the faith of Jesus. They will not be antinomians, for they will keep the commandments of God.

This is no time to let go your faith in the Bible. You may not understand it all, but, my friends, that Blessed Book is our only hope today. It contains God's message

for lost sinners like you and me. Its wonderful prophecies are being fulfilled, and the worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, the last great sign, is on its way. This is no time to plunge into pleasure-seeking and love of the world. It is no time to settle down and say it is no use, there's no hope. There is—it is the blessed hope.

Solemnly the words of our Lord come to us down the centuries from the Mount of Olives: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36).

May we be among those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing.

As a boy I grew up on my grandfather's farm in Colorado. I often heard my grandmother singing to herself. One of her favorite songs was about that great day when the King will return.

"There's a great day coming, a great day coming,  
There's a great day coming by and by,  
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted  
right and left,  
Are you ready for that day to come?"

These words made a deep impression on my youthful heart. Yes, I wanted to be ready. I still want to be ready. They made me think seriously. They make me think seriously now. Are we ready for that day to come? Are you ready for the King to come? We can be ready. Christ will be our Saviour if we will have Him.

A lover of children visited a certain school and talked to the youngsters there, and told them he was coming back again and would give a prize to the one who had the cleanest desk. "But when are you coming back?" was the question. "That I cannot tell" was the answer. A little girl who was noted for her disorderly habits announced that she intended to win the prize. Her schoolmates jeered, "You'll never get it. Your desk is always out of order." "But I mean to clean it the first of every week," she replied. "Yes, but suppose he will come at the end of the week?" "Then I'll clean it every morning," she responded. "But suppose he comes in the afternoon?" "Then," she said, "I know what I'll do. I'll just keep it clean."

And so it must be with those who love their Lord's appearing. They must be ready all the time. Yes, ready today, this evening, tomorrow morning, at midnight, at noon. They must keep their lives clean through His grace. They know not when He will come. They must remember that the Saviour's words were not "Get ready," but "Be . . . ready" (Matt. 24:44).

May God bless us one and all as we see and become a part of the last great sign. May we ourselves read the meaning of that sign and get ready, and keep ready all the time, by His grace. □



# THE DAY IN DALLAS

Sabbath, April 19

By B. B. Beach

For several months the interest of the Adventist world family has focused on Dallas. For most people outside the United States, Dallas is associated primarily with the sniper assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963, and the television show Dallas. For Adventists, Dallas will now be associated forever with the fifty-third General Conference session.

It is interesting to note that the origin and growth of Dallas somewhat parallels that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While our pioneers in the 1840's were launching the great Second Advent Movement, John Neely Bryan in 1841 built the first log cabin (you can still see it today not far from the convention center) as the embryo of Dallas, which was named after G. M. Dallas, vice-president of the United States from 1845 to 1849. Like the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dallas has had its spectacular growth since 1946—the church has quintupled her membership and the city its area.

As I write, it is seven o'clock Friday night and the Sabbath in Texas has just begun. Against the beautiful, dignified blue-white backdrop of the platform (the Finnish delegation must feel right at home, since the colors are similar to those of the Finnish flag), John Thurber is getting maximum music out of his six-thousand-voice audience in a lively song service. Brad Braley (as during so many previous General Conference sessions) is at the organ and Olive Braley at the piano. The platform party represents a true celebrity parade of Adventist radio and television personalities. This galaxy of pioneers in church use of the electronic media is being honored tonight. The occasion is the golden jubilee of the Voice of Prophecy radio program.

At every recent General Conference session (and this is the ninth I have attended) the music has been superb; this session gives promise of being no exception. In conversation with the U.S.S.R. delegation I found that the music has their endorsement, for the musical life in our Soviet Union churches is impressive. I know from firsthand experience. Yes, the Adventist Church is blessed by an abundance of talent. William McVay gave a thrilling trumpet presentation of "How Great Thou Art." In between, the Brazilian Voice of Prophecy quartet encouraged all of us by singing in Portuguese, "Never Give Up," in a pluperfect style reminiscent of former esteemed Glendale Voice of Prophecy quartets.

One after another the veterans and present stars of the Adventist radio work were introduced. Among them

were Alcides Campolongo (Brazilian radio pioneer), and Paul Eldridge (Japanese radio originator). C. E. Bradford, vice-president of the General Conference for North America, paid eloquent tribute to George Vandeman, whose *It Is Written* telecast can now be tuned in by some 50 percent of all television sets in the United States. Dr. Winton Beaven, no mean television performer himself, presented to William Fagal the Charles Weniger medal for excellence in oral communication. Neal C. Wilson, newly reelected General Conference president, paid tribute to two "illustrious pioneers of a ministry we need even more today." He praised H. M. S. Richards, Sr., for developing many disciples, and Charles D. Brooks, of the *Breath of Life* program, for breaking new ground in the use of television.

The circular Dallas convention Arena provides pleasant and comfortable facilities (am I right in saying this is the first General Conference session where the participants have been able to sit in padded chairs?) for a "meeting in the round." By 8:00 P.M. the auditorium had gradually filled until practically every one of the 10,000-plus seats was occupied—for the first time at this session.

A high point of the evening program was the evocative history of SDA broadcasting, under the theme "Let There Be Life," presented on the giant screen and narrated by Britain's Victor Cooper, an associate director of the General Conference Department of Communication. It is, of course, impossible to mention individually the scores of different programs that have encircled the globe and brought spiritual life to millions through the airwaves. I was impressed with the originality of W. Kamoda's children's radio program in Japan, which has been on the air since 1958. And *The Quiet Hour* broadcast from California has provided 51 planes for the mission field.

Tonight we are celebrating the golden jubilee of the "Voice of Prophecy, with its faithful staff (most of them stay out of the limelight and are unknown soldiers for Christ) and countless financial supporters. But before H. M. S. Richards, Sr., gives us the evening message, there is a short intermezzo on the theme "The Challenge of the Unfinished Task." Roland Lehnhoff, successful evangelist of the Euro-Africa Division, emphasizes spiritual preparation of the whole Adventist community as an absolute prerequisite for successful public evangelism. His program, *New Dimensions of Living*, helps provide people with practical answers to problems and current needs, not analytical speculation in the theological stratosphere.

Elder Richards is speaking. Once again I feel that the strength of his presentation lies in its simplicity and directness. Every talk or sermon is like a personal conversation, salted (sometimes even peppered!) with spiritual humor. Elder Richards said he would like to see thousands of ministers (and why not laymen?) having one-minute television spots. With leading futurologists, he sees a colossal knowledge increase in the offing and

predicts not an energy crisis but a veritable energy explosion.

The last great sign (or perhaps we should say signs) of the times is the worldwide preaching of the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages and the resulting worldwide denial of the gospel and opposition to Christ. Indeed, as "we hear the footsteps of an approaching God" we all have a part in the "orchestral mission" of the church, be it even only a "piccolo."

It is now Sabbath morning and once again (after a rather short night) I am sitting at the ADVENTIST REVIEW table surrounded by my professional REVIEW staff friends. William Webb is in charge of the song service. He is a department director in the Central California Conference. At 8:02 A.M. the platform group—representing the General Conference Education Department—moved up to the platform.

Amos Simorangkir, president of the West Indonesian Union, after conveying the greetings of the Indonesian authorities, presented a well-thought-out devotional on the theme "God Loves All Men." You may say, That is obvious. True, but the implications are not always evident, especially in Christian practice. Religion (Adventism, to be precise) and humanity must never tend to be dichotomous. The devotional speaker made a strong plea

for a relevant Adventism that comes to grips with personal and social needs. God loves all races, not in order to produce a pale, colorless amalgam, but in order to enhance the gifts and contributions of all races. Since it is humankind that God loves, He loves people of all political, religious, or nonreligious persuasions. Since love, on the human level, occurs only between real people, cross-cultural communication is essential. This should give the delegates plenty of food for creative thought.

It is now time for Sabbath school. Our superintendent is a true professional—Curtis Barger, of the General Conference Sabbath School Department. In his welcome he underlined the two-dimensional influence of the Sabbath school in solidification and unification. Music was provided by two youth musical ensembles, the Pinetree Academy bell ringers from Freeport, Maine, and the Armona Boys Choir (grades 5 to 8) from central California.

C. L. Brooks, well known for his gifts as a vocal soloist (he sang appealingly at the close of the worship service), introduced the four key objectives of the Sabbath school and had the audience repeat them in unison. Maureen Luxton, departmental director of the British Union, offered a prayer that was a model presentation of public prayer.

## The Nominating Committee

(Chosen by their respective divisions and unions April 17, 1980, 9:30 P.M.)

### Australasian Division

H. C. Barritt, W. Bili, D. E. Hay, C. D. Judd, D. E. G. Mitchell, R. E. Pengilly, L. A. Smith, A. H. Tolhurst

### Congregations of Seventh-day Adventists in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

M. P. Kulakov, P. G. Panchenko, N. A. Zhukaluhk

### Afro-Mideast Division

Dennis K. Bazarra, Bekele Heye, Zakayo Kusekwa, Peter C. Mairura, Baraka Muganda, Manoug Nazirian, Lilian Ngaruiya, Daniel Nseroko, Percy M. Paul, Truneh W. Selassie, Frederick Wangai

### Euro-Africa Division

A. Bueno, G. Cazaerck, P. de Freitas, J. Heinz, J. Hildebrandt, E. Kilian, D. Popa, R. Rupp, O. Sladek, J. Slinkamenac, F. Schoenfeld

### Far Eastern Division

Nestor A. Arit, Larry R. Colburn, Paterno M. Diaz, Robert L. Heisler, Joji Henmi, P. L. Hinoquin, G. Ray James, Nyong D. Langie, Eul Ki Lew,

Hyung Hwan Lyu, Efenito M. Macalintal, L. E. Montana, Sam Manueke, Jonah S. Maramis, Yonezo Okafuji, Levi H. Pagunsan, Agripino C. Segovia, Amos Simorangkir, Chook Ying Wu, Samuel Young

### Inter-American Division

Ramon Arujo, J. G. Bennett, Ismael Castillo, Maime Castejon, C. D. Christian, Ana Corona, Jaime Cruz, L. Herbert Fletcher, Francisco Flores Chable, Luis Florez, R. S. Folkenberg, N. S. Fraser, Gustavo Garrido, Napoleon Grunder, Samuel Guizar, R. L. Hoyte, E. A. Hyatt, Isaac Jean-Baptiste, R. J.

Kloosterhuis, Samuel Leonor, L. V. McMillan, Ramon H. Maury, Mario Munoz, E. J. Murray, Henry Niemann, Israel Recio, Guiscard Sablier, Eliasib Sanchez, W. W. Thomson, Israel Williams

### North American Division

E. W. Amundson, Eliezer Benavides, Mrs. B. A. Bergherm, W. D. Blehm, Lowell Bock, H. J. Carubba, W. O. Coe, C. E. Dudley, W.

C. Hatch, H. J. Harris, W. C. Jones, C. I. Keymer, F. A. Knittel, B. E. Leach, E. L. Marley, K. J. Mittleider, Carolyn E. Palmer, E. S. Reile, L. L. Reile, R. D. Rider, H. H. Schmidt, C. W. Skantz, Max C. Torkelsen, R. S. Watts, Jr., D. W. Welch, M. C. White, J. W. Wilson, J. P. Winston, R. L. Woodfork

### Northern Europe Division

W. Aittala, S. Dabrowski, E. H. Foster, O. Gjertsen, J. Madsen, K. C. van Oossanen, J. Paulsen, G. Wiklander

### South American Division

M. Afonso, E. Alayza, H. Berg, W. Boger, D. M. Borba, E. Chaij, A. Dassow, Z. Deucher, R. Gomez, R. Gorski, J. Justiniano, W. Mayr, D. Moroz, E. Percyra, A. dos Reis, A. Ribeiro S., Eleodoro Rodriguez, Eugenio Rodriguez, O. dos Santos, W. Sarli, O. Scully, J. C. Viera, J. Wolff

### Southern Asia Division

D. S. Ariyaratnam, Kyaw Balay, M. E. Cherian, J. Koilpillai, W. H. Mattison, R.

D. Riches, D. H. Skau, J. Willmott

### Trans-Africa Division

James T. Bradfield, Francis Campbell, H. Carl Currie, Welford W. Katundu, Paul M. Mabena, Henri E. Marais, Lysias N. Moyo, Fred E. Wilson

### New African Division

H. Anderson, Pheneas Bahimba, M. A. Bediako, Daniel Gueho, S. Jerome, Mrs. E. Khanji, Robert E. Lemon, Serya R. Mbangukira, Makotsi M. Mbyrukira, Joseph Nkou, J. J. Nortey, I. Nudobia, Raymond Randriamahafa, Stephano Sembada, DeWitt S. Williams, Maurice Zehnacker

### General Conference Institutions

R. R. Frame, Charlie Fry, D. W. Holbrook, L. J. Leiske, V. N. Olsen, H. F. Otis, D. R. Pierson, C. D. Rock, Grady Smoot, L. D. Wood

The committee chose the following for officers: H. H. Schmidt, Chairman; Grady Smoot, secretary.

Both the mission emphasis and the lesson study were given in each case as two-pronged presentations. Tom Ashlock, of the General Conference Sabbath School Department, and Sergio Moctezuma, of Inter-America, gave the mission appeal. Interesting historical and contemporary vignettes were presented regarding God's church in Guyana, the Inca lands, and Mexico.

I listened with thoughtfulness to Michelle Cleveland's full-throated rendering of "I Love to Tell the Story." Love and telling must go together.

The Sabbath school lesson, conducted in dialogue form by Calvin Rock, Oakwood College president, and G. J. Christo, secretary of the Southern Asia Division, was a model of cogency. I appreciated the thought that persecution takes many forms and that tribulation is pressure from modern-day living, slander, desertion of friends, and other forms of "mental persecution." At the end of their lesson study, Dr. Rock called upon the church to deal with all its "Jonahs"—sleeping, sneaky, prayerless Jonahs, et cetera. (Ask Dr. Rock for the whole stimulating list!)

Don Christman introduced another Don—Elder Reynolds, president of the Ohio Conference—who presented Faith-Action Advance, a movement rather than just a slogan. This evangelistic outreach program is based on the Sabbath school class as its nuclear unit. It works, but only where it has been tried! Norman Doss pointed out the effectiveness of this plan in the Trans-Africa Division, where he is Sabbath school director. Why not combine the 10-minute missionary period and the time given at the beginning of each Sabbath school class for welcome and missionary activity reporting into one consolidated missionary training program?

At the beginning of the worship service, G. Ralph Thompson, the new General Conference secretary, was introduced. He hails from beautiful Barbados, though he now has U.S. citizenship.

It was a solemn moment when intercessory prayer was offered by Elder Thompson for our believers in Cuba, who appear to be facing some special problems.

A musical high point was reached when the Montemorelos University choir and brass ensemble presented a Spanish medley combining five well-known Second Advent songs.

As I write, Elder Bradford is preaching a great sermon. He is a preacher after my own heart! Some of us are going to have to resist the temptation to get a "sermonic inferiority complex." Adventists must divest paralyzing presuppositions and come to God to hear what He has to say. Theological constructs must strengthen relationship to God. In his inimitable style Brad (as his friends call him) pointed out the fallacious trio of disobedience, formulas for magical protection, and stand-stillism (do some sound as though they were singing "Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God"?). Read the full sermon as reported elsewhere in this Bulletin.

During the first hour of Sabbath afternoon, the participants listened to four division Ministerial Association

secretaries explain how in their evangelistic outreach they are opening windows on the world. In Brazil, millions of tracts on the Second Advent are being scattered, accompanied by television spots. If 300 new churches could be built within the next two years, South America guarantees to fill them! The window to success in South America is the reaching of every home! This is the goal of Jose Bessa, Jr., the division's Ministerial secretary.

The Far Eastern Division window is called Disciple Power. If the ministers were to reach the 472 million population, each minister would have to contact more than 360,000 people! With every member involved in Disciple Power, each one would need to reach only about 1,100 people. The task becomes possible. This is the goal of the Far East's Jim Zachary.

Willis Lowry's window is the breakthrough taking place in contacting many tribes now amenable to the Advent message. Why have we waited so long? he asks. Trans-Africa's windows, says Al Long, are the unentered areas, the health ministry, the new religions, and church consolidation.

## Taskforce

While their elders were meeting in the Arena, the senior youth were conducting a similar outreach program in the Theatre (this is another hall in the convention center). While I was with the youth, special attention was being given to the volunteer student missionary program and the Taskforce—a newer program.

More than 2,000 students have now served as student missionaries. Those of us who have dealt with these volunteers know how valuable their contribution is to the church's worldwide mission.

Back in the Arena, Des Cummings has concluded his presentation on church growth in North America. This is one of the most important study projects undertaken by this church. The study is too involved and still too tentative to report in this story. One thing is clear: insofar as local church size is concerned, small is beautiful.

My watch tells me that the minutes of reporting time are approaching deadline. N. R. Dower is bringing to a close the Sabbath-day program he has presided over. C. E. Bradford is emphasizing the importance of the local pastoral function—which in the 1980's must clearly assume its pivotal role. There is little doubt that the higher organizations are no better and no more effective than the local churches, where the action is. Let us make sure that each member is *assigned* a task—that will produce the evangelistic explosion we long for and expect.

Another Sabbath day is curtained off from time by a sun setting across the shadowy plains of the Trinity River. Into that sunset march three and one-half million Adventists represented here in Dallas by the delegates to this fifty-third session. These delegates carry in their lives and words the promise of morning glory. □

# The Source of the message

Devotional message  
presented Friday  
morning,  
April 18, 1980.

By P. M. MABENA  
*President  
Southern Union  
Trans-Africa Division*



Although messages to the seven churches in Revelation must have applied in the first instance to the churches of Asia in John's own time, they were also relevant to the church in the future. A study of history reveals that these messages are applicable in a special way to seven periods that cover the entire history of the church.

John, writing to his beloved brethren in Asia, had this to tell them: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9).

It was here, on this small, barren, rocky island in the Aegean Sea, practically isolated from the rest of the world, that the beloved John, about 95 years old, and enjoying the companionship of God and Christ and the heavenly angels, received instruction for the church for all future time. This gloomy, cruel abode, the island prison, became to the aged servant of God the gate of heaven.

The apostle John was on the island of Patmos as a Roman prisoner. This place was chosen by the Roman government as a place of banishment for criminals. John found himself on this remote island because of his fearless testimony in defense of God's Word. During the reign of Emperor Domitian the question of emperor worship became a crucial issue for Christians for the first time. This was true in the Roman province of Asia. Conditions in this area were such that those who refused to worship at the emperor's shrine were persecuted. Because John was among those refusing, he was exiled to Patmos.

From his gloomy island abode John wrote the following prologue:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testi-

mony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near" (verses 1-3, R.S.V.).

The prologue indicates that the book of Revelation emanates from God the Father, that He is the source of the message, and that this message was given to Jesus so that He might show His servants what must shortly take place. Since the sin of our first parents, there has been no direct communication between God and man. All the communication between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. The glory of God was manifested through Him. Here, then, we notice the same pattern of communication being followed by Christ's sending His angel to His servant John, who, telling all that he saw, has borne witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ. It was Christ our Lord who appeared in vision to John and gave him a revelation of Himself and of divine truth for the enlightenment of the churches.

In his salutation to the seven churches in Asia, John further emphasizes the Source of the message that was to be sent to the churches through him. He writes, "Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come" (verse 4, R.S.V.). This last expression no doubt refers to God the Father, who now exists, who has always existed, and who will always exist. Continuing the salutation, John says, "And from the seven spirits who are before his throne" (verse 4, R.S.V.). This expression refers to the Spirit of God, one of the sources from which grace and peace are invoked for the church. John adds, "And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth" (verse 5, R.S.V.). Christ, the "faithful witness," is indeed the perfect representative of God's character to mankind. Whatever He bears witness to is true. Whatever He promises, He will surely fulfill. Here again we see the Trinity in action, a perfect unity of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit unfolding scene after thrilling scene in the experience of the people of God and foretelling the history of the church to the very close of time. The book of Revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation.

## The Alpha and Omega

In the introduction to the vision recorded in Revelation 1:10-20 John, in vision on the Sabbath day, heard behind him a voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea" (verse 11, R.S.V.). The speaker introduces Himself to John in these words: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (verse 11). The Person who spoke to John in that dazzling vision, who stood among seven lamps of gold and held seven stars in His right hand, was none other than Jesus Christ.



To me it is extremely interesting to notice how Christ identifies or introduces Himself in His salutation to each of the seven churches selected to receive letters from Him. To Ephesus He is the One who "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (chap. 2:1). To Smyrna He is the One who is "the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" (verse 8). To Pergamum He is the One who "hath the sharp sword with two edges" (verse 12). To Thyatira, "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (verse 18). To Sardis, "he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars" (chap. 3:1). To Philadelphia, "he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (verse 7). To Laodicea, the last of the seven churches, Jesus identifies Himself as "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (verse 14).

The name Laodicea implies the final step in the Christian process of history, that of perfecting a people adjudged righteous. Here is the final message to the church before the close of probation. We as Seventh-day Adventists recognize in the message to Laodicea a special application to ourselves as the remnant church. In *Testimonies*, volume 1, page 186, Ellen White wrote: "I

was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time." We exist in the time of the judgment and the proclamation of the final warning message preceding Christ's coming. Unfortunately there is much profession among us but little vital godliness and true piety.

In *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 196, the servant of the Lord says: "At this time the Laodicean message is to be given, to arouse a slumbering church. Let the thought of the shortness of time stimulate you to earnest, untiring effort. Remember that Satan has come down with great power, to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Are our ears open to the entreaties that the Saviour directs to us? Is the voice of the great "Amen, the faithful and true witness," a welcome sound to us? Will we heed it? Will we open the door and let Him in?

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," says Jesus. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (verse 20). Christ awaits your personal, individual decision, for this is the door to your own soul. He will not force an entrance but will await your favorable response to His tender entreaties. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (verse 22). □

## In 1888 the latter rain started falling in Minneapolis. Only nobody noticed. Except Ellen White and a few others.

Meet the people involved in this famous meeting. Discover what they taught, and find out how their message of righteousness by faith is the key to giving the Loud Cry. Read **THE 1888 MESSAGE—AN INTRODUCTION**, by Robert J. Wieland, with foreword by Donald K. Short, two long-time advocates of Christ's righteousness and authorities on the 1888 General Conference.

**Robert J. Wieland**

# THE 1888 MESSAGE

An Introduction

Foreword By Donald K. Short

Find **THE 1888 MESSAGE—AN INTRODUCTION** at the General Conference book display or your nearest Adventist Book Center. Or order by mail from ABC Mailing Service, Box 37485, Omaha, NE 68137. Please include sales tax for your state and add 10 percent (minimum, 85¢) for postage and handling. In Canada, mail to Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7L5. (only US\$4.50)



Southern Publishing Association  
Where Value Counts



Continued from page 17

secretaries of the overseas divisions stand while young ladies present yellow roses to the ladies of your delegations?

F. W. WERNICK: I feel warmly welcomed, don't you? Now, let us move ahead without disturbing the distribution of the flowers. Elder Franz, there are some other greetings that we would like you to present.

C. O. FRANZ: Before I bring these greetings, I especially would like to mention two delegations. For the past 22 years, we have been separated from a part of our family, but tonight we are pleased that three representatives are with us from Burma. Will they please stand? [Applause.] Welcome, brethren, and when you go back home, please take the greetings and the love of this delegation to our brothers and sisters in Burma, and our appreciation to the government for allowing you to come and meet with us. [Applause.]

When we met in Vienna five years ago, we were very pleased to have seven delegates from the congregations of Seventh-day Adventists in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Tonight we have nine delegates from that country with us. Will they please stand. [Applause.] When you go home, we likewise ask you to take the greetings and the love of this delegation to our large church membership in your country.

We have selected only four of the many personal greetings to be brought to the delegation tonight. First, Elder Wilson has received a letter of greeting from the White House, Washington, D.C., signed by Jimmy Carter, President of the United States of America.

"I want to extend a warm welcome to all delegates of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Your humanitarian work at home and abroad is in the finest tradition of service to God and to mankind. Your medical and educational projects are helping to improve the quality of life for countless individuals and families.

"As you meet to plan your future course, I pray for your every success, and I also ask for your continuing prayers for the well-being and release of the American hostages and for peace and progress throughout the world." [Applause.]

We have also received a cable from a country that just a few hours ago began to celebrate its very first day of independence—Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia.

It is a cable from A. W. Austen and the Trans-African Division staff in Salisbury, Zimbabwe. "Please convey to president and delegates assembled, our best wishes and assurance of our prayers for Spirit-imbued, and fruitful session of General Conference enjoying God's richest blessing."

The third greeting is signed by the Roundelwood Health Center in Crieff, Scotland. I hope Elder Leach is listening very carefully, because it contains some news for him. "Greetings to Dallas City and to assembled delegates

on the occasion of the fifty-third General Conference session from Scotland, the home of the original Dallas."

Greetings come also from M. A. Moses, a retired college principal in the East Nigerian Conference, West Africa. It is a long letter, but I cannot refrain from reading the first paragraph:

"A few days back it was my privilege to read through a brief writeup on the objectives and the program of the 1980 session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This information was announced in the

Advent Herald, the general church paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in Nigeria. After studying through the message, I felt an urge to send a brief 'God bless you' letter to the representatives of God's remnant church, which meets soon in Dallas, Texas, U.S.A."

Brother Chairman, I move that we return our greetings, with warmest respects and love, to President Carter and the others whose greetings we have received tonight. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

C. O. FRANZ: Brother

## BY HIS SPIRIT

(Zechariah 4:6)

K.N.

1980 General Conference Session Theme Song

Kathleen Newman

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a melody line with notes and rests, and the bass staff contains a bass line with notes and rests. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

The second system of musical notation includes lyrics. The treble staff has a melody line, and the bass staff has a bass line. The lyrics are: "Not by man's own might nor power, Will God's But God needs you, O dear Christian, And for".

The third system of musical notation includes lyrics. The treble staff has a melody line, and the bass staff has a bass line. The lyrics are: "work on earth be done, But by His Spir-it, His might-y Spir-it, Will the you He calls to-day, That by His Spir-it, His might-y Spir-it, You may".

The fourth system of musical notation includes lyrics. The treble staff has a melody line, and the bass staff has a bass line. The lyrics are: "bless-ed kingdom come. show the lost His way. Chorus Not by might nor by power, Not by might nor by".

The fifth system of musical notation includes lyrics. The treble staff has a melody line, and the bass staff has a bass line. The lyrics are: "power, But by His Spir-it, His Ho-ly Spir-it Will the work be done."

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# Standing Committees of the Session

Chairman, there is one other thing that we customarily do. It is not simply a formality, for it is always, I believe, from the heart.

This delegation represents 3,308,191 members of the Adventist family in 190 countries. These members are the real working force of the church. In fact, they are the church. Of this number, 81,672 are full-time workers. It is inevitable, though sad, that some will slip away from us by death during each quinquennium. A total of 1,187 such workers, including retired persons, have died. We miss them, but we confidently expect to meet them again on the great resurrection day. Brother Chairman, would it not be appropriate tonight to stand for just a few moments of silence in memory of these fallen warriors of the cross and their families? I should like to propose that we do so.

F. W. WERNICK: Will those who would like to join in this tribute, please stand. [Delegates stood.] Let us stand with bowed heads and in silence for a moment. [Pause.] Please be seated.

John Hancock, music director of the session, will lead us in the theme song of the fifty-third session of the General Conference.

J. H. HANCOCK: The Music Committee conducted a worldwide contest for a theme song. From 103 entries and without knowing who the composers were, the screening committee selected one that I think is significant. This is the first time a theme song has been selected from other than a North American composer. Kathleen Newman, who wrote this theme song, is with us tonight. Sister Newman, what division are you from?

KATHLEEN NEWMAN: The Inter-American Division.

J. H. HANCOCK: To introduce the theme song, the members of our music committee from around the world will sing the first stanza and chorus once so that you may hear it. [The group sang, followed by the congregation led by Elder Hancock, singing both stanzas.]

That was tremendous! Sister Newman, thank you so much for writing that beautiful song.

F. W. WERNICK: Wasn't that a beautiful theme song? So appropriate for the hour! As we become acquainted with it, I believe it will ring in our hearts and on our lips for many weeks to come.

Something happened during this past quinquennium that was unusual for the world church. Elder Robert H. Pierson, who had served as president of the

General Conference from 1966 until the Annual Council of 1978, found it necessary, on the advice of his physicians, to relinquish his heavy responsibilities. After due consideration by the Annual Council, Neal C. Wilson was elected president of the General Conference. Elder Wilson spent the first 15 years of his ministry in the Middle East Division as a leader. When he returned to North America he spent several years in departmental work and as president of the Columbia Union. In 1966 he was elected vice-president for North America and gave able, dedicated, consecrated leadership to that division until January, 1979, at which time he assumed his responsibilities as president of the General Conference. Since that time he has given himself, without reservation, to the work of that office. He has visited every division during the year 1979. He has become intimately acquainted with all aspects of the work of the church and has learned to know many of our members and leaders around the world. He has given able leadership to this church. Tonight he brings us his message and report on the work of the church for the past five years.

NEAL C. WILSON: My fellow delegates, brothers and sisters, friends, visitors, and special guests from other religious bodies and spiritual communions, with deep affection this evening and in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ I want to greet each one of you. We have been welcomed in many ways. Each word has been appreciated. Every token has been noticed.

[The President, Neal C. Wilson, then presented the keynote address, which appears on pages 2 to 7 of this Bulletin.]

F. W. WERNICK: Elder Wilson, I believe you are aware that all of us in our hearts respond to your challenge. We appreciate this report, which forthrightly sets before us the challenges that face the church.

Now we have further business to care for. As you know, the most important business of the evening will come later, when you are asked to select the delegates who will serve on the Nominating Committee.

There are several items that the General Conference Committee, meeting in Annual Council, felt should be presented to you before the Nominating Committee begins its work. These items will be distributed to

*Continued on page 28*

## Committee on Calls for Workers

C. E. Bradford, *Chairman*; Joseph Espinosa, *Secretary*

Lee Allen	N. R. Dower	W. R. Leshar	W. R. L. Scragg
B. L. Archbold	K. H. Emmerson	R. S. Lowry	J. G. Smoot
W. S. Banfield	J. H. Figueroa	E. Ludescher	F. G. Thomas
R. C. Barger	C. O. Franz	W. R. May	W. A. Thompson
S. D. Bietz	A. E. Gibb	M. L. Mills	C. D. Watson
J. W. Bothe	H. L. Haas	D. Nestares	F. W. Wernick
A. N. Brogden	F. E. J. Harder	Enoch Oliveira	J. H. Whitehead
G. O. Bruce	C. D. Hirsch	V. N. Olsen	R. W. Wilmot
Walter Carson	D. P. Huey	H. F. Otis, Jr.	Neal C. Wilson
R. H. Carter	B. E. Jacobs	K. S. Parmenter	W. H. Wilson
J. E. Chase	M. E. Kemmerer	R. L. Pelton	W. R. Wollard
W. T. Clark	J. C. Kinder		

## Committee on Constitution and Bylaws

Richard Hammill, *Chairman*; Alf Lohne, *Vice-Chairman*; A. E. Gibb, *Secretary*

W. S. Banfield	R. E. Clifford	L. J. Leiske	R. W. Taylor
B. B. Beach	R. R. Drachenberg	E. Enoch Oliveira	C. D. Watson
W. L. Blacker	K. H. Emmerson	V. N. Olsen	Bruce Wickwire
C. D. Brooks	C. O. Franz	R. E. Osborn	Neal C. Wilson
W. J. Brown	Eric Howse	C. B. Rock	K. H. Wood
G. J. Christo	Warren Johns	J. G. Smoot	J. Zurcher
W. L. Clark			

## Committee on Delegates, Seating of Additional, and Additional Standing Committee Assignments

M. S. Nigri, *Chairman*; R. F. Williams, *Secretary*; J. W. Bothe, J. H. Figueroa, C. O. Franz

## Committee on Plans

W. J. Hackett, *Chairman*; D. S. Johnson, *Secretary*

R. H. Abbott	O. C. Edwards	Pierre Lanares	B. W. T. Richardson
Marcel Abel	G. O. Engen	Harold Lance	V. L. Roberts
W. M. Adams	Mrs. Ake Eriksson	D. E. Lawson	H. F. Roll
J. J. Aitken	Joseph Espinosa	G. A. Lee	R. R. Roncarolo
Erich Ametung	Adeeb Fargo	W. S. Lee	D. J. Russell
R. E. Appenzeller	R. D. Fearing	Sek Tjun Lie	P. J. Salhany
T. M. Ashlock	I. Ferraz	A. Lohne	M. C. Sawvell, Jr.
D. R. L. Astleford	T. S. Flaz	A. M. Long	W. C. Scales
F. L. Baer	V. W. Foster	Alice Lowe	B. C. Schantz
W. S. Banfield	R. R. Frame	W. G. Lowry	A. E. Schmidt
D. M. Barnett	C. O. Frederick	Y. Lusingu	J. S. Singh
R. E. Barron	D. F. Gilbert	E. H. Mack	Mary Small
M. T. Bascom	E. G. Gomez	J. W. Mahon	D. W. Smith
R. W. Bates	Nevil Gorski	M. O. Manley	G. E. Smith
Yvonne Bazziel	R. B. Grady	E. L. Marley	P. G. Smith
G. E. Beagles	Roy Graham	G. M. Marsh	N. C. Sorensen
Haregewine Bekele	C. S. Greene	P. C. Mathew	J. R. Spangler
I. B. Benson	E. J. Gregg	R. F. Mattison	J. D. Spiva
Bernice Berghern	Helen Griffiths	G. Maxson	E. H. J. Steed
G. J. Bertochini	V. S. Griffiths	D. R. McAdams	M. H. Stevenson
Alex Besenyoi	D. R. Guild	R. D. McCune	E. M. Stiles
J. S. Blahovich	Sievert Gustavsson	J. W. McFarland	Herbert Stoeger
Thomas Blincoe	Gordon Hadley	W. J. McHenry	W. J. Streithorst
G. W. Boekenkamp	Victor Hall	A. C. McKee	Paul Sundquist
Oswald Bremer	J. H. Hancock	S. D. Mevers	R. J. Swannell
R. E. Brooks	J. H. Harris	Sergio Moctezuma	C. R. Taylor
W. J. Brown	Tulio Haylock	S. F. Monnier	R. C. Thomas
Nino Bulziz	R. R. Hegstad	M. D. Moses	G. R. Thompson
H. D. Burbank	R. H. Henning	W. L. Muir	J. O. Tompkins
L. L. Butler	C. D. Henri	W. L. Murrill	M. G. Townend
H. L. Calkins	C. V. Henriquez	M. B. Musgrave	Nantje Twijnstra
E. E. Carman	R. L. Hilde	V. P. Muthiah	R. Unnersten
G. T. Carter	D. B. Hills	Edouard Naenny	Masao Uruma
J. W. Cassell, Jr.	Betty Holbrook	R. W. Nixon	A. S. Valle
Gabriel Castro	D. W. Holbrook	Willy Nubuo	Mario Veloso
J. E. Chase	D. E. Holland	R. W. Olson	Nelci Viegas
D. R. Christman	Heinz Hopf	L. R. Palmer, Jr.	Heinz Vogel
J. M. Clemons	A. N. How	Jere D. Patzer	A. Warren
G. F. Clifford	E. W. Howse	Pekka Peltonen	Roy Watson
V. H. Cooper	J. N. Hunt	A. M. Peterson	Major C. White
Pietro Copiz	Sunderaj James	P. K. Peterson	Ruth White
F. C. Craig	S. R. Jayne	A. V. Pinkney	Bruce Wickwire
L. W. Crooker	H. D. Johnson	Alejo Pizarro	R. A. Wilcox
G. H. Crumley	F. L. Jones	L. A. Ramirez	C. A. Williams
Louise DeHaan	W. C. Jones, Sr.	H. F. Rampton	C. M. Willis
W. C. De Haven	Charles Keymer	L. S. Ranzolin	S. Wolde-Endreas
D. D. Dennis	Samson Kisekka	Earl Reed	J. H. Wollan
S. L. DeShay	Edna M. Khanji	M. H. Reeder	R. L. Woodfork
N. L. Doss	J. T. Knopper	R. M. Reinhard	N. J. Woods
N. R. Dower	G. E. Knowles	R. C. Reimbaldt	R. H. Woolsey
A. N. Duffy	R. L. Kooreny	D. H. Rhys	J. H. Zachary
H. I. Dunton			

Continued from page 27

you at this time. They are the general agenda for the session, the agenda for the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and the agenda for the Plans Committee. I would like to ask for a motion that these agendas be adopted for the session. [Motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

We will ask Elder Wilson to come to the pulpit and present an item entitled "Reorganization of African Affairs."

NEAL C. WILSON: Perhaps one of the most significant matters that we will discuss at this General Conference session involving the world field organizationally is the item before us now. At the present time there are four divisions administering our work on the continent of Africa. For some time it has been felt that there should be some reorganization of our work on that continent. At the present time there are about three quarters of a million Seventh-day Adventists in Africa organized into four divisions. It may be of interest to you to learn that in the country of Kenya in East Africa, the government recently released the results of a census. Kenya has 15 million inhabitants. The report revealed the startling fact that more than one million people out of 15 million in Kenya consider themselves Seventh-day Adventists. We know of about 140,000 to 150,000, but more than a million indicated that the Adventist Church is the church of their preference. God's work has gone far beyond what we realize.

It has been felt wise the past few years that Africa should have a different configuration in its organizational structure. I believe the church will always appreciate our brothers and sisters, in Europe especially, who had such a significant part in helping to bring the work in Africa to its present state.

There is a report in your hands that presents some of that historical perspective. W. R. Beach, former secretary and vice-president of the General Conference, who had a great influence with this development, is here tonight. Recently we have continued this study and now present to you a proposal that a new division be created in Central and West Africa that will include in its territory the French-speaking territories of Africa, as well as two English-speaking unions.

[C. O. Franz read the proposed action, "Reorganization of African Affairs" found on page 28.]

C. O. FRANZ: I would like to

move the adoption of this recommendation regarding the reorganization of African affairs in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

F. W. WERNICK: There are two other recommendations that we need to act on this evening. Elder Franz, our secretary, will read these recommendations to you.

[Elder Franz read the action, "GC Session Nominating Committee—Bylaws Addition," found on page 29.]

C. O. FRANZ: I would like to move the adoption of this addition to the Bylaws regarding the session Nominating Committee. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

F. W. WERNICK: The next item concerns the Nominating Committee and the relationship of the North American Division that has been voted by the Annual Council as a recommendation to this session.

[C. O. Franz read the action, "Expediting Nominating Committee Work—GC Bylaws Addition," found on page 29.]

C. O. FRANZ: I would like to move its adoption. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

F. W. WERNICK: You have been very helpful and cooperative this evening, and we have come to the end of our business except for one important item, the selection of those delegates who will serve on the Nominating Committee. This will be done immediately after the benediction.

K. H. EMMERSON: [Benediction.]

F. W. WERNICK, *Chairman*

J. W. BOTHE,

D. A. ROTH, *Secretaries*

## Session actions

### Reorganization of African Affairs

In the late 1960's, in response to expressions from persons in African fields indicating a need for organizational changes, the President of the General Conference, R. H. Pierson, and the Secretary, W. R. Beach, visited those fields, holding conferences with various groups in Europe and Africa. As a result of those consultations, modifications were made in 1970 and 1971 which resulted in division organization substantially as at present. Since then our work in Africa has been administered by four divisions of the General Conference, all but one of which have headquarters outside the African continent.

In the first half of the decade of the 1970's, continued correspondence came from African fields. It expressed the viewpoint that our present division organization was not viewed favorably by many SDA Africans, nor by some African governments, since it gives the appearance, at least in some aspects, of hold-over colonialism. Some of our African leaders and constituents also felt that the location of division headquarters in Europe and the Middle East prevented adequate opportunity for Africans to participate in leadership roles in our strongly developing African work.

The viewpoint was expressed that our African members would be challenged to take greater responsibility for the development of our work if the headquarters were located among them where they could participate more fully in leadership. Moreover, it was asserted that at present the division leaders are located too far away to be able to give adequate leadership to the work in Africa.

As a result of these viewpoints, Robert H. Pierson visited the African fields in early 1973, holding consultations in various places. After his return the General Conference established a committee to study the matter, which on June 6, 1973, recommended that a predominately French-speaking division (to be known as West Equatorial-Central Africa Division) be established at the time of the 1973 Annual Council. It was to be composed of the predominately French-speaking areas of Africa plus the Nigerian and West African Union Missions. The committee further recommended that the division staff should be largely French-speaking, and that Africans should be included on the division staff.

These recommendations were considered by the Home and Overseas Officers, but it was decided that no action be taken at that time due to unsettled political and economic conditions in Africa.

In 1976 the president of the General Conference received further expressions from Africans to the effect that changes in division organization should be made. Accordingly, an Africa Study Committee was appointed. After extensive study of the matter, the Committee reported to the President's Executive Advisory and to a group of officers from divisions with territory in Africa. These meetings were held in October, 1978, and March, 1979. As a result, five General Conference officers,

under the chairmanship of President Neal C. Wilson, met with members of the four division committees in April and May, 1979. They also conducted in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, from April 29 to May 2, 1979, a consultation with the officers of the divisions and representative leaders from various parts of Africa.

Following these consultations, various meetings have taken place concerning the matter. As a result of all these studies and developments, recommendations were made to the 1979 Annual Council in which it was agreed that the time has now arrived for our Seventh-day Adventist work in Africa to be administered from headquarters located in Africa, and that eventually our work in Africa should consist of only two divisions of the General Conference. It is therefore

*Voted*, 1. To reorganize the Seventh-day Adventist work on the African continent at the fifty-third session of the General Conference in Dallas, Texas, according to the following plan:

a. Organize a new division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists composed of the following union missions:

Central African Union Mission from the Trans-Africa Division

Indian Ocean Union Mission from the Euro-Africa Division

A new union mission composed of the Ivory Coast Mission, Togo-Benin Mission, Upper Volta Mission from the Northern Europe-West Africa Division, and the Northwest African Mission from the Euro-Africa Division

Nigerian Union Mission from the Northern Europe-West Africa Division

West African Union Mission reorganized to include only the English-speaking countries presently in this union from the Northern Europe-West Africa Division

West Central African Union Mission from the Euro-Africa Division

Zaire Union Mission from the Trans-Africa Division

Note: Inasmuch as the official language of most of the countries of this new division would be French, it is recommended that the headquarters of this new division be located in a French-speaking area. The decision concerning the location of headquarters and similar matters would be made by the new division committee in consultation with the General Conference.

b. Maintain on a temporary basis the Afro-Mideast Division as presently constituted with

temporary headquarters in Cyprus.

c. Maintain on a temporary basis the Trans-Africa Division approximately as presently constituted with headquarters in Salisbury, Rhodesia, less the Central African Union Mission and the Zaire Union Mission.

2. To review the temporary Afro-Mideast Division and Trans-Africa structure as outlined above at the 1984 Annual Council, with a view of combining the two divisions into one.

3. To authorize the General Conference Treasury to make studies and recommend the financial structure of the three divisions in Africa and the two divisions in Europe.

4. To reduce the size of the three division staffs in view of the fact that financial planning to date for division reorganization has been built on the premise of only two divisions for Africa. Prior to the 1980 General Conference session, the General Conference, in consultation with the divisions concerned, would make available for the guidance of the session nominating committee the number of budgets for the Afro-Mideast Division staff and the Trans-Africa Division staff.

5. To restructure the Northern Europe-West Africa Division to consist of the European territories presently within the division.

6. To restructure the Euro-Africa Division to consist of the European territories presently within the division, plus the Israel Mission and the North African Mission and until the 1980 Annual Council, Angola and Mozambique.

7. To review the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist work in Europe at the 1984 Annual Council.

8. To request the General Conference to take measures to foster the continued interest of the Seventh-day Adventists of Europe in our work in Africa. This would include fostering regular visits of leaders from Europe to Africa, and vice versa, the appointing of personnel from Europe to serve in Africa, the continuation of volunteer service programs, the active promotion of mission offerings, and the solicitation of assistance from European government developmental programs for Africa.

### GC Session Nominating Committee—Bylaws Addition

*Voted*, To add a new subsection f. to General Conference Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, Standing Committees, to read as follows:

f. The nominating committee shall limit its nominations to those positions for which budgetary provision has been made.

### Expediting Nominating Committee Work—GC Bylaws Addition

*Voted*, To add a new paragraph to the General Conference Bylaws, Article II, Section 2, as follows:

In order to expedite the work of the Nominating Committee, the representatives from each division, including North America, shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time to meet and consider the personnel needs of their respective divisions and to make

recommendations to the full Nominating Committee. Decisions of these groups shall not be binding on the Nominating Committee as a whole, but shall be submitted as recommendations which will be considered. The North American Division group shall recommend personnel for the following offices in the General Conference:

Two Associate Secretaries

Two elected members of the General Conference Treasury Staff

One Associate Director for the Department of Communication

One Associate Director for the Department of Education who shall serve as Executive Secretary of the NAD Board of Higher Education and who shall have been recommended by that Board

One Associate Director of the Department of Education who shall serve as Executive Secretary of the NAD K-12 Board of Education and who shall have been recommended by that Board

One Associate Director of the Department of Health in the field of Hospital Administration who shall serve as Executive Secretary of the NA Health Services Board and who shall have been recommended by that Board

One Associate Director of the Department of Health in the field of nursing

One Associate Director of the Department of Lay Activities

One Associate Secretary of the Ministerial Association

One Director of the NAD Office of Human Relations

One Associate Director of the NAD Office of Human Relations

One Associate Director of the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty

One Associate Director of the Publishing Department

One Associate Director of the Sabbath School Department

One Associate Director of the Stewardship and Development Department

One Associate Director of the Temperance Department

One Associate Director of the Youth Department

One General Field Secretary who shall be assigned as Secretary of the Committee for North American Missions

One General Field Secretary who shall be assigned as Liaison between Government and the Departments of Education and Health of the General Conference

One General Field Secretary who shall be assigned as Executive Secretary for the ASI

## Second business meeting

Fifty-third General Conference session  
April 18, 1980, 9:30 A.M.

### Session proceedings

C. D. MARTIN: [Directed the opening song service.]

D. K. BAZARRA: Welcome to the second business meeting. We shall sing Hymn 16, "I Need Thee Every Hour." Prayer will be offered by D. C. Beardsell, president, Tanzania Union. The benediction will be offered by Sylvain Jerome, president, Ivory Coast Mission.

D. C. BEARDELL: [Prayed in Kiswahili.]

W. J. HACKETT: We have come together for another session this morning. We had a wonderful meeting last night. Raise your hands if you are happy to be here. Well, I think everyone is.

Brother Williams, will you please present several items regarding seating of delegates?

R. F. WILLIAMS: [Deletions and additions to the official delegate list were read by categories.

For each category a motion was made, seconded, and voted. See p. 30 for the complete listing of these names.]

W. J. HACKETT: We hope to have a short business meeting at 3:45 P.M. today. It is not on your schedule, but keep it in mind and write it in your program booklet. We hope to have a report from the nominating committee at that time.

We will ask the treasurer to present his report first. K. H. Emmerson has been the General Conference treasurer for 21 years.

K. H. EMMERSON: Thank you, Brother Chairman. Inasmuch as this will be my last report, I would like the treasurers and the controller to stand at this time. [Applause] [The full text of the treasurer's report will appear in Bulletin 3.]

At this time we shall ask the



After Cyril Miller, Texas Conference president, welcomed delegates, young women gave yellow roses to some women delegates and guests.

undertreasurer, Martin Kemmerer, to present the audited financial statement for the last quinquennium. After the report is presented, we will be happy to endeavor to answer any questions you may have.

**M. E. KEMMERER:** Brother Chairman, delegates, I think you have all received a copy of the summary of the financial report. It is a brief one. This summarized financial report includes the General Conference Sustainment and Retirement Funds, the Corporation, the Association, and the North American Conference Association or Corporation. [Elder Kemmerer commented on the various sections of the summary.]

We are ready now to receive the auditor's certificate. We have two auditors here today, because during the first two years of this quinquennium, 1975 and 1976, the General Conference auditing staff performed this function. For the years 1977, 1978, and 1979, an independent public accounting firm was hired to audit General Conference financial records. David Dennis, the chief auditor of the General Conference Auditing Service, and Jack Powers, an auditor from the accounting firm, will each read the respective certificate for their portion of the report. First, Elder Dennis.

**DAVID DENNIS:** [The report was read.]

**JACK POWERS:** [The audit report for 1977, 1978, and 1979 was read. This report will appear later.]

**M. E. KEMMERER:** I would like to move that we accept these reports as presented.

**W. J. HACKETT:** You have heard the report. Microphones, one at the front and one about midway back, are in each aisle. If the delegates would like to ask questions of either the treasurers or the auditors, you are invited to do so now.

**LEIF E. HANSEN:** I am Leif Hansen, publishing director of the Zaire Union. The litigations that are mentioned on page 22 regarding notes to the financial statements seem to involve a rather large amount of money. The explanation on page 2 says that these litigations are no longer considered important. I would like to ask for clarification.

**K. H. EMMERSON:** While we do not wish to go into great detail here, this has to do with an air accident that occurred outside the territory of the United States to individuals who were not employees of the church. The attorneys for the plaintiffs included

certain organizations of the church in their litigation. The facts are that the case has been thrown out of the first court. Whether they will appeal or meet the deadline to appeal is not known, but the situation is such that probably they will not have a case. In the event that they do, the church has sufficient insurance.

**W. J. HACKETT:** Are there other questions? Are you ready to call question on the report? [Question was called and acceptance of the report voted.]

**K. H. EMMERSON:** I just want to say one thing to the delegation. This is your church. This is your money. When you have questions, feel free to ask any of us, either through correspondence or personally.

**W. J. HACKETT:** Now we have an illustrious gentleman who has been in the General Conference Secretariat in one position or another for more than 14 years, Clyde Franz. We are looking forward to your report.

**C. O. FRANZ:** Thank you, Brother Chairman. Your program booklet lists this as the report of the General Conference secretary. The report is really the report of a team of persons, men and women, who have worked very closely together during this term and before. [The full text of the General Conference secretary's report will appear in the next issue.]

**W. J. HACKETT:** That was a lovely report, wasn't it? We want to give D. W. Hunter a minute for a brief addendum.

**D. W. HUNTER:** Those twin nurses mentioned in the secretary's report volunteered to go to Cambodia for medical relief. Three weeks ago they completed their work for their Master's degree on one afternoon, worked from 11 o'clock that night until seven the next morning, and on Tuesday morning took the plane for Cambodia.

**W. J. HACKETT:** Amen! That is the kind of dedication that makes this work go, isn't it? We appreciate that report.

Now we are told there is a strong possibility that we will have a report from the Nominating Committee if we will wait a few minutes. We will present two or three other items while we wait for that report. They have to do with the new African division we voted to organize last night. The secretary will read these items for us, after which a vote will be taken.

[The secretary read recommendation 3007 A, New Africa Division—Timing of Implementation, see p. 32.]

**M. T. BATTLE:** Brother Chairman, I would like to move the adoption of this recommendation. [The motion was seconded and voted.]

**W. J. HACKETT:** The secretary will read the report. [3007 B, New Africa Division Budget Distribution, was read. See p. 32.]

**M. T. BATTLE:** I would like to move this recommendation, Brother Chairman. [The motion was seconded and voted.]

**W. J. HACKETT:** H. H. Schmidt, the chairman of the Nominating Committee, is on the platform. I believe, Brother Schmidt, you have a partial report for us.

**H. H. SCHMIDT:** Yes, Brother Chairman, we do. Brother Chairman and fellow delegates, we have had a good morning together as a nominating committee. I suppose it is the

largest one ever convened at a General Conference session, 185 members, from all parts of the earth. Elder Wilson has helped us organize and begin our work. Dr. Grady Smoot, president of Andrews University, secretary of the committee, will bring the report.

**W. J. HACKETT:** Thank you. Dr. Smoot, please give us the report.

**J. G. SMOOT:** Brother Chairman, the Nominating Committee has voted to nominate Neal C. Wilson as president of the General Conference for the quinquennium 1980-1985.

**W. J. HACKETT:** Do you move it?

**J. G. SMOOT:** I move it, Brother Chairman.

[The delegates stood spontaneously.]

**W. J. HACKETT:** I do not believe it is necessary to call for

## Additional Delegates

Certain delegates whose names appear in the list in Bulletin No. 1, pp. 5, 12-15, could not serve. Their names, as indicated below, were deleted by vote of the conference from the list of delegates. Others were added as authorized by policy.

### Delegates at large

#### General and Institutional

General Conference  
H. C. Mattison  
Delete: W. L. Pascoe  
Pacific Press  
Lawrence Maxwell  
Delete: T. R. Torkelson

#### Afro-Mideast Division

Middle East Union  
Antar Yacoub

#### Euro-Africa Division

Mozambique Union  
Delete: Abilio Tungululo

#### North American Division

Pacific Union  
Francisco Anguiera  
Delete: Donald E. Stutler  
Southwestern Union  
C. R. Pritchett  
Delete: H. W. Kibble

#### Northern Europe-West Africa Division

Erling Olsen  
Fred Voorthuis  
Delete: Johan Elisenberg

#### South American Division

Hector J. Peverini  
Delete: W. E. Murray

### Regular delegates

#### Euro-Africa Division

Mozambique Union  
Delete: Esteves Mutomola

#### Far Eastern Division

Central Philippine Union  
Joyce Lim  
A. Z. Roda  
North Philippine Union  
Ruperto S. Galang  
Southeast Asia Union  
R. R. Standish

#### Inter-American Division

Franco-Haitian Union  
Jacques Colomba  
Nathanael Myrthil  
Delete: Justin Colomba  
Delete: Gabriel Desvarieux  
Mexican Union  
Arturo Escudero  
Casto Maheda  
Joel Salazar  
Mario Villarreal  
Delete: Eligio Lopez  
Delete: Ismael Mendoza  
Delete: Aminidab Morales  
Delete: Tito Santos

#### North American Division

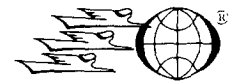
Atlantic Union  
Verda Foster  
Delete: Terrence O. Moore  
Southwestern Union  
H. L. Meister  
Delete: Ernest Wolfe

#### South American Division

Chile Union  
Eugenio Gutierrez  
Delete: Eugenio Barria

#### Trans-Africa Division

Zambesi Union  
Karl Seligmann  
Mrs. Karl Seligmann



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the vote since it appears that everyone in this auditorium is standing in full harmony with the nomination. I am declaring the vote passed. Brother Wilson, would you and your wife and your father and mother come to the platform at this time?

I would like, on behalf of the delegates, to be first to greet Elder Wilson. Then I would like his father and mother to be next. Will Elinor please join her husband? Behind every good man there is a better woman. Brother Wilson, Sr., [father] is your wife here? Will you please come, too?

Brother Wilson, on behalf of the delegates here, I want to congratulate you because you have the love and respect and devotion of the world field. [Applause.] Father Wilson, would you like to greet your son here?

N. C. WILSON, Sr.: It's a real pleasure. [Applause.]

W. J. HACKETT: Is Ted here?

N. C. WILSON: I have a little granddaughter that I'd like to show the delegates.

W. J. HACKETT: All right, would Elder Wilson's son, Ted, and Nancy [Ted's wife] bring Elder Wilson's little granddaughter to the platform? We

would like to have the whole family here together.

Brother Wilson, these delegates are standing in dedication, appreciation, respect, and love to you, wishing you, I am sure, the Lord's richest blessing as you continue during this challenging period of the next five years. It will be a very difficult period for this church. Delegates, you may be seated. [Delegates took their seats.] We would like to ask Elder Wilson to say a word to us in response.

N. C. WILSON: My fellow delegates, brothers and sisters, this is an hour when one's mouth is a little bit dry. One's heart is not quite beating at the normal rate. It is an awesome and very sacred responsibility that you have asked us to carry. Every day I realize it more than the day before. One always feels very inadequate. Can you hear our granddaughter calling, "Grandpa"? I tell you, she is the sweetest little granddaughter!

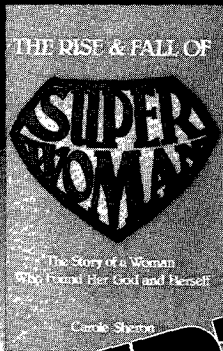
I want to draw a brief lesson from a land where I lived for quite some time. My wife and I spent fifteen years in the Middle East, the land where God taught Moses a great many lessons. Moses gave many excuses for not accepting the Lord's invita-

tion to cooperate with Him.

As he approached the burning bush to investigate, he heard his name called, "Moses, Moses," and he approached with greater caution. Then the voice said, "You have come far enough. The ground where you stand is holy ground." God said, "Moses, I need you. My people need you. They need to be guided. They need someone to encourage and strengthen and take them through to the Promised Land. Take them out of bondage where they have been." You remember Moses responded, "Well, Lord, certainly I am not the person." Then he started to make excuses. He said, "The people, my own people, won't listen to me." Brothers and sisters, sometimes some of us feel we are a very lonely voice. But I do feel, after the kind of reception my brothers and sisters gave me in the Nominating Committee this morning, that I am not a lonely voice. I do not feel an unresponsive spirit. I feel that God has brought us together for a significant time.

We do not have a burning bush today, but I do consider this to be a place where God speaks to men

*Continued on page 32*



She had to achieve, do more, be everything to everybody, for she feared losing the love and respect of her family, friends—and even God. So she turned to drugs in order to be a

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Continued from page 31  
and women. And He is going to speak to others during these next few days. Moses said, "Pharaoh won't listen to me. He never paid any attention to me. With all those forces against us, what can I do, Lord?"

The Lord said to him, "I will use a little pressure, if necessary. I will convince." Moses was still uncertain. So God said, "Throw down your staff, Moses." And you will remember it became a serpent. It startled Moses. He picked it up again.

Then He sent Moses another trial. "I want you to know that I am serious about this. Put your hand inside your cloak." He did, and when he pulled it out, it was leprous. God said, "Put it back in." When he took it out again, it was clean. And the Lord said, "I have other signs that I can give you, too, but isn't that enough?" Then Moses said, "You know, Lord, I don't really know how to speak. I have a faltering, stuttering speech. I have an impediment." God said, "Moses, who made the human mouth? When you need to speak, I will help you." Moses had little more to say, except that he kept arguing with the Lord, saying, "Lord, please, please send someone else." God seemed to be a little irritated, a little impatient with Moses. He said, "All right, Moses, I will give you someone else. Aaron will speak for you. But now will you accept?"

You know, my brothers and sisters, there comes a time when you don't argue with the Lord. You don't argue with your brothers and sisters. You don't make excuses. You don't indicate how feeble you are. You

simply claim His promises and His strength. That is what Elinor and I will try to do. Helping God's church today, as with Moses, involves one's wife and family.

I am so happy today that Ted, my son, a minister in New York City, is here with Nancy, my daughter-in-law, and my darling, sweet granddaughter. When she looks at me with those loving eyes, you can tell she and her grandfather really have an affair. Our daughter and son-in-law are in Iowa City, where he is taking a cardiovascular surgery residency. They will be here next weekend with us.

As with Moses, I, with my wife and my family, will serve the Lord, knowing that He will lead.

Brothers and sisters, we covet your prayers. God is speaking to His church today. We will do humbly, though probably imperfectly, your bidding and your wishes. Thank you so much.

[Applause—many pictures were taken.]

SYLVAIN JEROME: [The benediction was pronounced in French.]



H. H. Schmidt, Southern Union Conference president and chairman of the session Nominating Committee, makes his first committee report.

## Session actions

### New Africa Division— Timing of Implementation

**Voted,** To record the following in respect of timing of implementation of the new Africa division:

1. Immediately after their election in Dallas the new Africa division administration shall be authorized to assume full responsibility for planning for the new division, and assume operational responsibility at a time to be agreed upon by the General Conference Committee.

2. The General Conference shall appoint a taskforce which would include no less than two General Conference treasury representatives to give direction in financial and statistical matters as soon as possible after the creation of the new Africa division. This taskforce should also

a. Give direction to the allocation of division and union funds as voted for 1980.

b. Give direction to financial matters, including division institutions, and

c. Make funds available immediately for the new division administration to function adequately.

3. The final date for all technical aspects of accounting, banking functions, et cetera, should be completed no later than January 1, 1981.

4. The items referred to in sections 2 and 3 above should be worked out in cooperation with the present divisions involved, the new Africa division, and the General Conference.

5. The first meeting of the division committee of the new Africa division should be held during or immediately following the General Conference session in Dallas to care for urgent matters.

### New Africa Division— Budget Distribution

**Voted,** To set the following levels for budgets for elective and nonelective staffs for the reorganized divisions:

	Elected Personnel	Other Staff	Total
Afro-Mideast Division	11	16	27
Euro-Africa Division	11	20	32
Northern Europe- West Africa Division	11	16	27
Trans-Africa Division	11	20	31
New Africa Division	11	14	25

Further, we recommend that the eleven elected persons in each case include the three division officers and eight for departments and other areas.

The category listed as "other staff" would include any assistants to officers or departments, as well as other administrative supporting staff such as office secretaries, et cetera, but

not necessarily the helpers needed in such areas as custodial service, security, maintenance, et cetera.

### Nominating Committee Report

**Voted,** To elect the following person to occupy the position indicated: General Conference president: Neal C. Wilson.

## Third business meeting

### Fifty-third General Conference session

April 20, 1980, 3:45 P.M.

### Nominating Committee Report

**Voted,** To elect the following persons to occupy the positions indicated: General Conference secretary: G. Ralph Thompson; General Conference general vice-president: Alf Lohne; General Conference general vice-president: Enoch Oliveira; General Conference general vice-president: Francis W. Wernick.

Adjourned

W. J. HACKETT, *Chairman*  
M. T. BATTLE  
J. W. BOTHE  
*Secretaries*

## Nominating Committee Reports—1 and 2

Presented and accepted at the second business meeting, Friday morning, April 18.

### General Conference

President: Neal Wilson

Presented and accepted at the third business meeting, Friday afternoon, April 18.

### General Conference

Secretary:

G. Ralph Thompson  
General Vice-presidents:  
Alf Lohne  
Enoch Oliveira  
Francis W. Wernick