Theme: “The Acceptable Year of the Lord’s Favor”

FROM THE WEST INDIES UNION

It gives me pleasure to greet our readers, and Spirit of Prophecy Coordinators in our churches throughout this Union and around the world, on behalf of the members of the administration and staff of West Indies Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The start of a new year is often considered to be a time of new beginnings. As you read this publication, it is my prayer that you will be inspired to accept the total renewal that is only possible by the saving grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I wish for you all, days that are filled with an appreciation of the fact that our salvation has already been bought by the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary, and that all we need to do is to extend our hearts in faith to Him who is able to save us from death and destruction.

May you be fully assured of the love of Christ for you,

Patrick L. Allen, President
West Indies Union, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“To all who walk in His ways the new year will be crowded with goodness and blessing.”

(Australasian Union Conference Record, January 5, 1914).
FROM THE DIRECTOR:

THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR (I)

BY MARTIN HANNA

A New Year. Soon after His baptism in water and with the Spirit of prophecy (Luke 3:22; 2 Peter 1:21) Jesus went to Nazareth. There He read a text in Church concerning “the acceptable year of the Lord” or “the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:19). This event deserves our consideration as we begin a New Year.

The Old Year seems to have gone by so quickly! How long was 2003? Depending on how you measure it, the year consisted of 31,536,000 seconds, 525,600 minutes, 8,760 hours, 365 days, 52 weeks, or 12 months. 2004 will be just as long, or just as short!

Don’t worry, be happy! Whether we view the year as long or short, it is impossible to bear the burdens of this year all at once. Jesus said, “Take therefore no thought for tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself” (Matthew 6:34). We will spoil our happiness if we “take thought” about the year in terms of worry.

However, Jesus does want us to think about the New Year in terms of happy anticipation of the favor of the Lord. Take note of the words He spoke at His home church in Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19).

The year of Jubilee, described in the Old Testament, is a symbol of the acceptable year of the Lord’s favor, announced by Jesus.

According to Old Testament law: “You shall keep holy the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty . . . . It shall be a jubilee to you. You shall return every man to his possessions and his family. . . . You shall not oppress one another. . . . A hired servant shall be set free in the year of Jubilee with his children (Leviticus 25:10, 17, 53, 54).

Ellen White writes that an Israelite “might for a season dispose of his possession, [but] he could not barter away the inheritance of his children. When redeem it; debts were remitted every seventh year, and in the fiftieth, or year of jubilee, all landed property reverted to the original owner. Thus every family was secured in its possession, and a safeguard was afforded against the extremes either of wealth or of poverty” (Education, 43).

In the Jubilee debts were canceled; slaves were emancipated. God is a God of Liberty! In contrast, Satan is a god of bondage. Satan is the god of mental bondage: “The God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is the god of physical bondage: “So Satan went out and smote Job” (Job 2:7). Satan is the god of spiritual bondage: “He that committs sin is of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

In the acceptable year of the Lord’s favor, there will be a reversal of Satan’s bondage. God defeats Satan through the ministry of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus those who are mentally, physically, or spiritually sick may be healed. Those who are dead may be raised to life!

What a Jubilee! Let us look closely at the Scripture that Jesus read to the people of Nazareth so long ago. He read: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the Acceptable Year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1,2).

We need to be anointed or baptized with the Holy Spirit of Prophecy as was Jesus. “Do we truly wish our loved ones a happy new year? Then let us make it such to them by kindness, by sympathy, by cheerfulness, by unselfish devotion. If we connect with God, the source of peace, and light, and truth, His Spirit will flow through us as a channel, to refresh and bless all around us. . . . Let us all consecrate to God the property he has entrusted to us. Above all, let us give him ourselves, a free-will offering. Let us do his will, live for his glory, and He will give us a Happy New Year” (Signs of the Times, January 5, 1882).

(Part 2 next month)
2003: A year of Great Accomplishments for the Research Centre

By Martin Hanna, Director; and Kerry-Ann Chambers, Administrative Assistant.

A new born research centre. As the newest member of the Ellen G. White Estate (EGWE) family, we are happy to present a report from the Ellen G. White—Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre (EGW-SDA-RC) at Northern Caribbean University (NCU), Mandeville, Jamaica. Our launch date, July 10, 2003, marked the climax of a great work by the EGWE, the Inter-American Division (IAD), West Indies Union (WIU), and NCU.

During the final stages of that work, we (Martin Hanna and Kerry-Ann Chambers) had the privilege of planning for and participating in a wonderful opening ceremony with James Nix, G. Ralph Thompson, and Ivan Leigh Warden (EGWE), Israel Leito and Leon Wellington (IAD), Patrick Allen and Ronnie Henry (WIU), and Conference and University presidents, pastors, and members from WIU and the Caribbean Union.

Strategic activities. Since our launch, we have been involved in seven strategic activities: (1) building a budget and organizing the functioning of the Centre in harmony with guidelines provided by the EGWE; (2) facilitating research by two hundred and thirty-two students in five Gift of Prophecy classes; (3) answering questions on Spirit of Prophecy issues (including historical and theological questions); (4) building up the resources of the Centre; (5) promoting our services and creating links with other Centres and Church leaders through publishing five issues of our monthly news letter: “The Spirit of Prophecy”; (6) promoting membership in our “Spirit of Prophecy Association;” (7) presenting Spirit of Prophecy Bible Conferences in the various countries of the WIU.

Statistical report. We are encouraged by our statistical report (July to November) which shows 1130 visits to the center. Most of our clients were students of NCU; 155 visits were by university faculty; 70 were from the Church community. We participated in 41 e-mail consultations, and 37 telephone consultations. 129 digital copies and 505 hard copies of our news letter have been distributed. In November our web site became available and we have emailed 160 persons to inform them that the news letter is online. We also received 54 items of new material from the White Estate and through donations.

Budget. Our annual budget for the Centre (J$ 6,500,000) is largely funded by a partnership of the IAD, WIU, and NCU. The IAD provided the materials for the centre and provides the Director’s salary and overseas travel budget. The WIU and NCU fund most of our other costs. The Research Centre will raise J$ 1,000,000—toward balancing our budget—through our Spirit of Prophecy Association.

Association membership. The annual fee for our Spirit of Prophecy Association is J$ 1,000. Three categories of members support and benefit from our activities. First, regular members may be sponsored by an institution. For example, some Spirit of Prophecy Coordinators may be sponsored by their churches. Second, membership fees may be contributed by purchasing materials from the Centre. Third, membership fees or larger contributions may be donated by members who are called benefactors.

News Letter. “The Spirit of Prophecy” news letter is dedicated to the promotion of biblical truth concerning God’s revelation through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of Prophecy. This news letter equips the members of the Spirit of Prophecy Association to participate in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thus far, our five monthly news letters have highlighted the following themes: The Launch of the Centre, Stewardship, Faith and Learning, Spiritual Leadership, and The True Spirit of Christmas.

Web Site: http://egw-sdaresearch.ncu.edu.jm. In November, 2003, our Website was launched. It provides information on the Bible, Ellen White, Seventh-day Adventism, and the services of the Research Centre. Five issues of our news letter are online along with Messages from the Director, Questions and Answers, Principles of Interpretation, Humor, Association Information, Fascinating Facts, Client Talk Back, and News.

Taking the Center to the Churches. Since the July 10, 2003 launch, the Administrative Assistant (Kerry-Ann Chambers) has made Research Centre promotions at the Pike, White Hill, Roses Valley, and Comfort Hall, and Mile Gully Churches in Central and West Jamaica.

The director of the Centre (Martin Hanna) has made twenty-five major presentations in various churches, conferences, and countries in the WIU. Topics presented include: “Spirit of Prophecy and Culture” (Ministerial Fraternity, Central Jamaica); “The Spirit of Prophecy and the Development of SDA Theology” (Elders’ Association, East Jamaica); “The Spirit of Prophecy and Our Research Centre” (Camp Meeting, West Jamaica).

In addition, four presentations have been made based on a book project by the director under the theme—The Holy Spirit of Prophecy: Full of God and Loving It. The topics are: (1) Spiritual Fullness Love is not Blind; (2) Full Fruit: If You love me Show Me; (3) Full Service: When Love Goes to War; (4) Full Stature: Love’s Dwelling Place.

These presentations show the role of the Spirit of Prophecy in establishing the biblical basis of our doctrines on the Judgment, Righteousness by Faith, the Great Controversy, and the Sanctuary. Such presentations have been made at: Andrews Memorial, East Jamaica; Hill View, Nassau, Bahamas; Freeport, North Bahamas; Salem, North Jamaica; Santa Cruz, Newland, and Colleyville, Central Jamaica; and at NCU.

<continued on page 4>
The future. Cooperation with various departments of NCU is enhanced by the director’s position (50% load) as a member of faculty in the School of Religion and Theology and in the College of Graduate Education and Leadership. One possible area of exciting collaboration has to do with the provision of real time dialogue with some of our Spirit of Prophecy Coordinators through enhanced information technology. More on this and other plans will be presented in later editions of our newsletter. Until then, may the Holy Spirit—who inspired the prophets (2 Peter 1:21)—be with us all in God’s great work.

DONATIONS

The Research Centre is thankful for the donation of the book: Story of Our Health Message, by D. E. Robinson, donated by Mr. Dwight Rose.

We are also in need of the following books:

- Daniel and The Revelation, by Uriah Smith.
- The Sanctuary Service, by M. L. Andreasen.
- The Coming of the Comforter, by Le Roy Froom.
- Christ Our Righteousness, by A. G. Daniells.
- The Two Republics of Rome and the United States, by A. T. Jones.

If you would like to donate these or other materials, please contact us at the address on page one

**“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD”** (Isaiah 61: 1, 2).

THOUGHTS FOR A NEW YEAR

“Let us **begin the year** with an entire renunciation of self; let us pray for clear discernment, that we may understand our Saviour’s claims upon us, and that we may always and everywhere be witnesses for Christ.”

*Signs of the Times*, Jan. 4, 1883.

“Seek to **begin this year** with right purposes and pure motives, as beings who are accountable to God.”

*Our High Calling*, 7.

“Let us gather up the treasures of the past year, and carry with us into the **new year** the remembrance of God goodness and mercy. Let us brighten the future by the thoughts of past blessings.”

*This Day With God*, 358.

“Who will seek at the beginning of this new year to obtain a new and genuine experience in the things of God? Make your wrongs right as far as possible. Confess your errors and sins one to another. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be put away; let patience, long-suffering, kindness, and love become a part of your very being; then whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report will mature in your experience.”

*Lift Him Up*, 15.

We’re on the Web!
http://egw-sdaresearch.ncu.edu.jm
**Questions & Answers**

**Question:** How many books and articles did Ellen White write?

**Answer:** At the time of her death Ellen White's literary productions totaled approximately 100,000 pages: 24 books in current circulation; two book manuscripts ready for publication; 5,000 periodical articles in the journals of the church; more than 200 tracts and pamphlets; approximately 35,000 typewritten pages of manuscript documents and letters; 2,000 handwritten letters and diary materials comprising, when copied, another 15,000 typewritten pages. Compilations made after her death from Ellen White's writings bring the total number of books currently in print to more than 130.

**Question:** What is Ellen White's most popular book?

**Answer:** Millions consider Ellen White's classic volume on the life of Christ--The Desire of Ages--to be their favorite Ellen White book. But her most popular book is Steps to Christ, which presents the essentials of basic Christian living. First published in 1892 and since translated into more than 135 languages, tens of millions of copies are in circulation.

**Question:** Did Ellen White believe the earth to be about 6,000 years old?

**Answer:** While Ellen White stated that she was shown in vision that creation week consisted of seven literal days (The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 85), she did not claim to have received any special revelation regarding the specific age of the earth. However, she rejected the idea that "the world has existed for tens of thousands of years." She accepted the Biblical record that the creation days were seven literal 24-hour periods, believing that the world "is now only about six thousand years old" (Ibid., p. 87).

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**Fascinating Facts**

**Did you Know that...**

* Ellen White's last known writing is the letter titled "The Victorious Life". She wrote this letter on June 14, 1914 and you may read it in her book Testimonies to Ministers, 516-520. This letter "is a message overflowing with hope and assurance for Christians." (Roger Coon, Biographical Background, Nov. 15, 1991).

* Edson White, Ellen White's son, "did pioneer evangelistic and educational work among blacks in southern USA. [He] built [the] steamboat "Morning Star", and floated it to Mississippi River and thence down to State of Mississippi where...he taught blacks to read and write." (Roger Coon, Biographical Background, Nov. 15, 1991).

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**The EGW-SDA Research Centre has an interesting document on:**

"Ellen G. White Statements Concerning Cancer."

**You may purchase it for JS25.**

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We welcome your questions and comments on Spirit of Prophecy matters. Please, send your comments or questions to the EGW-SDA Research Centre. (See address on page one).
“People have too often based their understanding of Mrs. White’s teachings upon a fragment of a paragraph or upon an isolated statement entirely removed from its teachings. [Ellen White wrote]… that ‘many study the Scriptures for the purpose of proving their own ideas to be correct. They change the meaning of God’s Word to suit their own opinions. And thus they do also with the testimonies that He sends. They quote half a sentence, leaving out the other half, which, if quoted, would show their reasoning to be false. God has a controversy with those who wrest the Scriptures, making them conform to their preconceived ideas’ (Selected Messages, 3: 82).

“W. C. White often had to deal with the problem of people using material out of its literary context. In 1904 he noted that ‘much misunderstanding has come from the misuse of isolated passages in the Testimonies, in cases where, if the whole Testimony or the whole paragraph had been read, an impression would have been made upon minds that was altogether different from the impression made by the use of selected sentences’ (W. C. White to W. S. Sadler, Jan. 20, 1904).” George Knight, Reading Ellen White, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997, 85-86.

An example of the importance of literary context is Paul’s statement: “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28; cf. 4:5-6, 9-12). These words are better understood in context with the words that follow: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law [“through faith”] (3:31).

Faith in Jesus. “Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it [righteousness] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, . . . whosoever believeth on him [Jesus] shall not be ashamed” (9:31-33).

To establish the law is to fulfill all God’s law. “For this [law], You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying . . . love is the fulfilling of the law” (13:9-10).

Paul’s letter begins and ends with definitions of the gospel in terms of its fruit in faith that works (Rom 1:5; 16:25). The beginning: “The gospel which He [God] had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son . . . for obedience to the faith” Rom 1:1-5). The ending: “My gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ . . . is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (16:25).

As Ellen White put it: “Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. . . . All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. . . . Through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation” (Faith and Works, 94).
The Spirit of Prophecy Association:

Did you Know? The Ellen G. White—Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Northern Caribbean University has launched a Spirit of Prophecy Association. Members of the Association support and benefit from the activities of the Centre.

Activities at the Centre include collecting and preserving Ellen White’s writings as well as other materials (supportive and critical) that are relevant to SDA theology and history. We also produce research, present seminars, and answer questions about Ellen White and SDA history and theology.

The annual budget of the Centre (J$ 6.5 million) is largely funded by a partnership of the Inter-American Division, West Indies Union, and Northern Caribbean University. The Division provided the materials for the centre and provides the Director’s salary and overseas travel budget. The Union and University fund most of our other costs.

To maximize our ability to serve you, the Research Centre will raise J$1 million each year to supplement our budget. We will do this by receiving donations of J$1,000 or more from those who become members of our Spirit of Prophecy Association.

There are three groups of members. First, regular members may be sponsored by an institution. For example, some Spirit of Prophecy Coordinators may be sponsored by their churches. Second, regular membership fees may be contributed by purchasing materials from the Centre. Third, fees or larger contributions may be donated to the Centre by members who are called benefactors.

NEW MEMBERS! We would like to welcome to our Spirit of Prophecy Association: Pastor Linden Williams, Loften Culmer, Elvis Carey, Barbara Tanis, and Laura Anderson from the Eleuthera District of churches of Bahamas Conference, and Mrs. Louise Mitchell from St. James, Jamaica.

Please fill out and send this coupon to the

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Northern Caribbean University,
Mandeville, Jamaica

egw-sdaresearch@ncu.edu.jm
martinhanna_ncu@yahoo.com
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