

Elder W.C. White's Letter to Elders Kneeland and Scoggins

St. Helena, California
May 30, 1931

Elders Kneeland and Scoggins
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Brethren:

I count it a privilege to write to you regarding the work of Medical Evangelism that is being carried forward with good results in many places, and which work we hope to see wisely developed and broadened and deepened, until its influence is felt the world around.

In one of Sister White's manuscripts entitled "Medical Missionary Work," file No. MS-32-1901, we read: "We shall see the medical missionary work broadening and deepening at every point of its progress, because of the inflowing of hundreds and thousands of streams until the whole earth is covered as the waters cover the sea."

How shall we understand this, and how shall it be brought about? I have been a very interested observer of the working and the influence of some of the successful efforts put forth during the last few years to conduct medical evangelistic work, and to train both workers and leaders for this line of soul winning labor.

The work that has been done during the last two or three years in the Potomac and neighboring conferences, by the united labor of leading workers connected with the Washington Sanitarium and the officers of the Columbia Union Conference, has commended my admiration and confidence. And the weekend ministrations being carried on at the present time by Dr. A.W. Truman and his associates, in the churches in and around Washington to a distance of fifty miles, appeals to me as a blessed example of what may be done in other places.

The Medical Evangelistic Educational Campaign being led by Elder J.G. White in Melrose

and other suburbs of Boston is a marvelous revelation of the preparedness of the people for Medical Evangelistic instruction.

In the southern counties of California, where the nurses from the Paradise Valley Sanitarium and employees of the South Eastern California Conference have united in evangelistic effort, splendid results have been witnessed.

Though the methods in each one of these efforts are somewhat different, the aims and results are similar, and all are encouraging.

It is my firm conviction that some plan should be devised by which this work in its many blessed phases should be so reported that it may be better understood.

I believe that the work and influence of the Field Training School in Gospel Medical Evangelism operating in San Francisco should be brought in a clear way to the attention of our people. It is a wonderful example of what a single conference can do to set in action a training institute for many lines of Medical Missionary Work and Medical Evangelism.

Will you join me in asking Dr. Truman, Elder J.G. White, and Elder Burden, to provide for me and for you, in printed form, brief but comprehensive statements regarding successful methods, accompanied by relating of experiences, that may be used to elucidate and encourage much wider enlistment of Medical Evangelism.

I think that you are acquainted with my work, and know that as Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the White Estate, with whom Sister

Ellen G. White left the custody of her writings, it has been my privilege and duty to study very diligently the messages given through her to the remnant church. I refer to the messages found in her many published books and also especially to those that are found in the many hundreds of letters and manuscripts kept in her extensive manuscript file. These were kept in response to her direct instruction and were left by her for our benefit.

As I and my associates have studied these writings, we have been surprised, encouraged, and amazed at the evidences therein presented that our heavenly Father has made wonderful provision for our enlightenment regarding success and victory in every phase of Christian Evangelism. We have been especially impressed by the clearness and forcefulness of the instruction regarding the importance and the urgency of the work of training a host of young people to be successful laborers in the spreading of the Gospel, by every agency employed by the Master.

As we have read scores upon scores of pages regarding acceptable evangelistic work, we have found an astonishing degree of emphasis given to Medical Missionary work and Medical Evangelism. And we cannot evade the conviction that there is, pointed out to us very clearly, a line of work that is rarely followed in a truly serious way by other ministers or physicians, or by Bible workers or nurses.

As you very well know, almost every minister can tell us of a few blessed experiences wherein he has been forced by unusual circumstances to minister to the sick, and he delights to relate the blessings which followed these experiences, mostly experiences of long ago.

Almost every experienced Adventist physician can tell us of many occasions where he has been led to open up to his patients the blessed hope through Christ. And he rejoices in the influence of this experience upon his own heart.

Notwithstanding this, you can count on the fingers of your two hands all the ministers and all the physicians that you know to be laboring continuously on the plan of work pictured in our minds when we read of Christ's ministry, and when we

study His commission. In fact, you know that there are very few who make these soul winning experiences a matter of frequent occurrence.

We must confess that for centuries the enemy of all righteousness has planned successfully to separate the work of teaching the gospel from that of healing the sick.

In view of these conditions, we rejoice that our heavenly Father has sent to us messages in which we find such cheering words as follows:

"God's blessing will rest upon every effort made to awaken an interest in health reform for it is needed everywhere. There must be a revival on this subject; for God purposes to accomplish much through this agency."—MS 6a, 1890

"Seventh-day Adventists are to be represented to the world by the advanced principles of health reform which God has given us."—MS 166, 1899

"Christ gave a perfect representation of true godliness by combining the work of a physician and a minister, ministering to the needs of both body and soul, healing physical disease, and then speaking words that brought peace to the troubled heart."—*Counsels on Health*, 528

In this connection, please read the accompanying manuscript bearing the title "Quotations Regarding Gospel Medical Evangelism." This grouping of extracts was made by the workers in the San Jose Mission. Read also from "Cheering Words" the extracts referred to in the accompanying list.

In the light of this instruction, it will appear to you as a very natural thing that I have taken a deep and abiding interest in the work of the Field Training School in San Francisco. During the three years of the operation of this school, I have been a frequent visitor, and an enthusiastic supporter. I should have been equally active in encouraging the other lines of effort in Medical Evangelism, had I enjoyed the same privilege of being near enough to them to intelligently enter into co-operation.

The Field Training School of Medical Evangelism is still in its formative experience. Its faculty has been strengthened year by year, until it now employs six competent teachers. The lines of instruction given, and the fields of activities of its

students and teachers, are briefly stated on an accompanying leaflet.

I will now refer to one feature of the Field Training School which has given me great encouragement. That feature is its aim at permanency and the possibility of its continuance. You will appreciate my joy over the possibility of its continuance when you consider the numerous instances in which efforts for the training of workers for Medical Evangelism have been inaugurated and have grown and borne precious fruit for one or two years and then died. Here I will mention a few of the many instances of short-lived efficiency.

In Australia, Elders Starr, Haskell, and Baker, with their wives and other helpers did a wonderful work in health reform instruction in connection with evangelistic effort, and when they left the field there was no one to carry the work forward in the same lines with similar strength.

In New York City and in Boston and its suburbs, Elder Haskell, Starr, and Doctor Ingress did a work in Medical Evangelism that was far-reaching in its influence, but when they were called to other fields, there were no locally trained workers prepared to continue and maintain that line of effort.

In connection with the establishment of the Loma Linda Sanitarium, excellent work in Medical Evangelism was carried forward by Loma Linda students ably led in field work by Dr. Lillis Wood Starr and others. It was a great success, and an eye-opener on house-to-house work and cottage lectures.

Sister White felt so keenly its value that she gave hundreds of dollars to keep it going. When three years of successful work had been accomplished, it was permitted to die of starvation.

Repeatedly Sister White pleaded with the teachers in Fernando School to take their students during vacation into the city of Los Angeles and give them a training in soul-winning work. One year they did so. It was a great suc-

cess, and having made one great success, they never tried again.

None of the efforts were continuous. No leaders were trained from among the students. The question in my mind has been something like this: Shall we go on to the end of the controversy, seeing the world's need, and reading of Christ's method of ministry, and reading the clear, pointed instruction regarding the need and value of Medical Evangelism, and let it pass as a pleasant song?

Or shall we ask our most experienced laborers to make a demonstration once in three years of what can be done, and in its connection give to a few co-laborers a brief, superficial training that falls short of efficiency

Or shall we encourage the maintenance of the Field Training School in San Francisco, and hope and pray that we may soon see efforts of the same sort in other places?

Do those who have taken the Medical Evangelistic Course value the instruction? Read the Symposium Leaflets.

Do those undertaking to work out the ideas of the school find Providence working with them? Read the letters from the workers in San Jose.

Shall we become discouraged because of the forty and nine objections and criticisms offered regarding the schools? Here are a few of them:

The course is too long. The course is too short. The course is unbalanced. The teachers are enthusiasts. Less time should be given to house-to-house work. More time should be given to house-to-house work. The students are bent toward too much effort for the very poor. The students are too anxious to work for the very rich. And so on without limit.

Shall we decide the value of the tree by analyzing its leaves? Or shall we say with the Master, "A tree is known by its fruits?" What think ye?

(Signed) W.C. White

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