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E.G. White Research Center  
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Office Address:

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS  
TAKOMA PARK, WASHINGTON 12, D.C.

April 27, 1962

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#17

CONCERNING THE MEDICAL SCHOOL

Elder W. R. Beach  
Office

Dear Brother Beach:

My attention has just been called to a brochure issued by Dr. A. W. Truman on March 16, 1962, and particularly to page 3 where reference is made to my work at Loma Linda and the manner in which I answered a question asked me by Dr. Truman at the door of the Loma Linda Church. I am of the opinion as I read this statement that Dr. Truman has correctly represented the question which he asked me and my reply. However, Dr. Truman has failed to make reference to that which I did say in a question and answer period when I received a number of inquiries on the question of the development of the work in Los Angeles in the light of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels. There are probably a thousand people that can bear witness to what I have said, not only to our church members in the Loma Linda area, but to the two groups of ministers comprising the Andrews University Extension Schools which were held in La Sierra and Los Angeles while I was on the Pacific Coast.

Our medical school is dear to the hearts of all Seventh-day Adventists, and it is not strange that they have been following with interest the development of the plans for carrying forward its work. I knew that when I went to Loma Linda to hold public meetings I would be asked not only in the meetings, but on every street corner concerning the relation of the actions which have been taken by the General Conference Committee and the Loma Linda University Board, as they might relate to the Spirit of Prophecy counsels regarding our medical school. My expectations were well supported by the facts.

I do not know, Brother Beach, as I should take your time to recount here the line of presentation which I made on a number of occasions on the Pacific Coast, in public and in private. Suffice it to say that I made it very clear that Sister White counselled against the establishment of a Sanitarium in the heart of Los Angeles, as was contemplated in 1902. I hastened to point out that a clinical division of a medical school is not a Sanitarium. The objectives are not the same and they would not operate under the same conditions. I pointed out as is clearly set forth in the materials which I assembled in 1953, that Ellen White in the year 1912 met with the Board in Loma Linda and made very clear her approval of plans which

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made very clear her approval of plans which would call for doing part of the work in Los Angeles. If I am not mistaken, I called the attention of my hearers to the fact that this is recorded in the book Story of Our Health Message by Elder D. E. Robinson (1954 edition) on page 399. I pointed out that in the years 1915 and 1916, my father, Elder Haskell and other of our brethren who were concerned with the welfare of the medical college, in their articles, argued in this manner: The Lord, through Sister White, has made it very clear that we must operate a medical school graduating physicians capable of passing State Board examinations. If we are to accomplish this, we must have a clinical division of the school in a center of population where the clinical material will be available. Therefore, if we are going to follow the light which the Lord has given concerning the medical school, we must give strong support to the establishment of a clinical hospital in Los Angeles, for it is only in this manner that we can accomplish the work that we have been called upon by the Lord to do.

I pointed out that it was in harmony with this line of reasoning that we moved forward in Los Angeles in the establishment of a hospital which was named most fittingly in honor of the one through whom the messages had come to us, calling into being our medical college. I pointed out that of course it was undesirable to draw our young people into a center of population. The Lord has given us light as to what will take place in the cities. We are counselled to choose areas of rural environment which are most conducive to physical and spiritual well-being, especially when there are families with children.

But I pointed out also that in the very same address in which Sister White pointed out, "My warning is: Keep out of the cities, build no sanitariums in the cities. Educate our people to get out of the cities into the country," she also stated, "Our restaurants must be in the cities; for otherwise the workers in these restaurants could not reach the people and teach them the principles of right living. And for the present, we shall have to occupy meetinghouses in the cities."--General Conference Bulletin, April 6, 1903, quoted in Selected Messages, Book 2, p. 142.

At this point I emphasized that while we were clearly counselled that our Sanitariums should be in rural environments, the clinical division of the medical school was not a Sanitarium, it was an institution established for a specific purpose of giving training to advanced medical students and that the peculiar circumstances made it inevitable that it be operated in an area where the clinical material was available. So, just as Sister White said we must operate our restaurants in the cities to accomplish a certain work, so it would appear that there were circumstances which justified the operation of a clinical division of a medical school in a center of population.

I pointed out that thirty years ago when a junior medical student went from Loma Linda into Los Angeles, he was of about the same age as the freshmen students which will not be admitted to the Los Angeles division of the medical school, for thirty years ago we admitted students to the medical course



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after completing fourteen years of school work, while today very few are accepted without their bachelor's degrees. Therefore, from the standpoint of maturity the students that go into Los Angeles when the plan is carried out will be of about the same maturity as they have been in years gone by when they have gone to Los Angeles.

I pointed out also that this move to undergird the clinical division of our medical school with basic science was one which was done in the interests of better medical education and recommended by the Committee on Education of the American Medical Association, but that it was the full understanding of the General Conference Committee and of the Board of the Loma Linda University that the strengthening of the work at Los Angeles did not in any way affect the work which we have been doing at Loma Linda and will continue to do at Loma Linda; that it was the farthest from the intention of the members of the Board and the General Conference Committee that we should be moving the medical educational work which is being done at Loma Linda into Los Angeles. I pointed out that at the recent Autumn Council in the planning for the future of Loma Linda University, it was specifically specified that the clinical interests at Loma Linda would be strengthened and that the brethren had every intention of carrying out those plans.

After making this basic presentation, I was questioned privately here and there as I met individuals, and this led me to send to Washington for the Minutes of the Autumn Council actions, both in 1960 and 1961. At a later meeting in the Loma Linda Hill Church, I read from these actions in an attempt to answer a number of supplementary questions which had come in to me in the interim of two or three weeks. I made it very clear that the problems which were faced in the operation of a medical college were absolutely stupendous, that I believed that the General Conference Committee and the Board were endeavoring to find their way in harmony with the counsels which the Lord had given to us through the Spirit of Prophecy, and we should give the Board our strong support and pray earnestly that the Lord might guide the men.

I continued to receive many questions in writing, and I am receiving more since I have returned to Washington. I think some of the folk at Loma Linda felt that I had sort of let them down by my representation that Ellen White had had a part in laying the plans for medical educational work to be carried on in part in Los Angeles. There are some who have grown rather rabid in this matter.

Now this was the background, and when Dr. Truman, at the door as I was shaking hands with the hundreds of people who passed one Wednesday evening, asked the question which he has presented, in which he particularly specified, "the transfer of the Loma Linda division of our medical college to the Los Angeles campus," I answered, "I am sure that she would not."

In closing, let me say, Brother Beach, that as Mrs. White and I had occasion to be on the Los Angeles campus of the Loma Linda University twice each week for a period of seven weeks, what we saw brought courage to our hearts. We

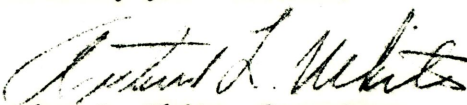


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were pleased with what we observed in the standards which are held; in the sincerity and the consecration of the personnel, from the staff members down to the lowliest of the students and helpers. We were pleased to see that the freeways have somewhat isolated the hospital from the city itself and that we have been able to spread out, clearing away a good bit of the cheap housing around the institution. We have been able to close some streets, and thus bring us some protection. I cannot help but believe that our brethren who are carrying the burdens of the work there are laboring most earnestly with the best interests not only of the school but the cause of God in mind. I can tell you very frankly that I would be deeply concerned were we to take any steps which would be in the direction of abandoning the basic medical education at Loma Linda as we have been conducting it for many years, but I am sure others would feel just as I do.

Should any questions arise that would make it advantageous for me to present further my contacts over this question, I shall be happy to meet with the officers or anyone who would so desire.

Sincerely your brother,

  
Arthur L. White, Secretary  
ELLEN G. WHITE PUBLICATIONS

In his letter of acknowledgement dated May 1, 1962, Elder W. R. Beach wrote:

Dear Brother White:

We have your letter of April 27, and wish to thank you for it.

I find this a very clear and able presentation of the problems we encounter at the present time in connection with the view of some. . . .

We shall place this letter in the hands of the brethren so th y may not only see your relationship to Doctor Truman's question, but also the good work you did in presenting these various problems during your stay at Loma Linda University.

The Loma Linda University Board nor the General Conference Committee have never projected a plan by which the Loma Linda Division of the medical school would be transferred to Los Angeles. We would not vote such a plan, nor would we allow such a plan to be carried out. The Loma Linda Division is to be strengthened with better clinical facilities and research projects in the University, while the clinical teaching at Los Angeles simply will be undergirded with the necessary basic science teaching, to make the clinical teaching in harmony with acceptable teaching principles and acceptable to the accrediting bodies.

Very sincerely yours,

W. R. Beach, Secretary