

CHAPTER ONE

A CALL TO EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA

97 ~~7~~ 7 (#3)
E.G. White Research Center
FILE COPY

During the nine years of her labors in Australia, Mrs. E. G. White wrote many messages of protest against the building up of large centers, as had been done in Battle Creek. Especially did she warn of the evils resulting from the enlargement of the great Sanitarium in that place. She pointed out not only that means were thus used in one place that should be distributed in the needy places of earth, but that there was danger that in a large sanitarium a spirit of self-sufficiency and pride, while ministering to the wealthy, should supplant the spirit of unselfish service that brings the gospel of health to the poor as well as to the rich.

But it was difficult for those leading out in medical missionary work to grasp the new vision of the diffusion of the gospel of health from many centers rather than from a few. Therefore, notwithstanding the repeated warnings against centralising influences, and the appeals to distribute the workers and the facilities, some continued to plan for combining many interests under a central control. It is with this picture in mind that we may best understand the repeated instruction to those entrusted with the work in Southern California.

In these messages it was stated many times that there were to be a number of Sanitariums, also that they should not be located in large cities, but in beautiful country places, with small treatment rooms and restaurants in cities adjoining them to act as feeders.

Many times in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, God has anticipated plans that to human appearances appear wise, but that are not in harmony with His infinite wisdom. And once again, in His divine foresight, He sent messages through His servant to turn aside a plan to center the medical work in Southern California in the midst of the city of Los Angeles.

"In August, 1901," wrote Mrs. White, "while attending the Los Angeles campmeeting, I was in the visions of the night, in a council meeting. The question under consideration was the establishment of a sanitarium in Southern California. By some it was urged that this sanitarium should be built in the city of Los Angeles, and the objections to establishing it out of the city were pointed out. Others spoke of the advantages of a country location.

"There was among us One who presented this matter very clearly and with the utmost simplicity. He told us that it would be a mistake to establish a sanitarium within the city limits. A Sanitarium should have the advantage of plenty of land, so that the invalids can work in the open air. For nervous, gloomy, feeble patients, outdoor work is invaluable. . . .

"Life in the open air is good for body and mind. It is God's medicine for the restoration of health. Pure air, good water, sunshine, the beautiful surroundings of nature, --these are His means for restoring the sick to health in natural ways."

--Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, p. 85.

March 18-20, 1902, about six months after this view was given to the Lord's servant, a council of the leading brethren in the Southern California Conference was being held in Los Angeles. The restaurant work, and the work of the treatment rooms in Los Angeles had been successful, and it was felt that the enterprises should be enlarged, and that commodious buildings should be erected for them rather than to continue paying rent.

A block of land was secured on Second and Hill Street on which it was proposed to erect a mammoth sanitarium, five stories in height, with one hundred rooms. Another location for a large food factory had been selected on East First Street in the very heart of the city. For these enterprises \$120,000 was to be borrowed. It was believed that the profits of the Food factory would be large, and would assist in paying off the indebtedness incurred in the construction of the buildings.

And now again, as had occurred many times, a message from heaven was received at the exact time it was needed. While the brethren in council were favorably considering these plans, two documents were received by the president of the Southern California Conference from Sister White, entitled, "The Southern California Sanitarium," and "The

Location of the Sanitarium in Southern California." In one of these,

dated March 17, 1902, she said:

"Last night the same scenes passed before me that passed before me thirty-five years ago, when the light was given to establish a sanitarium that would be the means of educating many souls in regard to the right principles of living, and of bringing them to a knowledge of the truth. We must establish sanitariums for this purpose, and they must be so conducted that God can co-operate with the efforts made in them to relieve physical and spiritual suffering.

o o o

"During the past three nights light has been given me that in the medical missionary work we have lost great advantages by failing to realize the need of a change in our plans in regard to the location of sanitariums. It is the Lord's will that our sanitariums shall be established outside the city. These institutions are to be places in which those who conduct them and those who come to them for treatment, will be given every opportunity for obtaining a rich spiritual experience. o o o

"The night before last, so many things were presented to me that I arose about half past ten, saying, 'I thank the Lord for thus teaching me that in our sanitariums we can do more than simply give treatment.' The sick should be taught that they are to surrender themselves, body, soul, and spirit, to Christ, whose they are by creation and by redemption. o o o Let the patients be educated to commune with Christ. He is the source of power and goodness. He is looking down on this world with pity, seeking to draw souls to Himself.

"Let our medical institutions be established on extensive tracts of land, where the patients will have an opportunity for outdoor exercise. This will prove to be one means for their restoration to health. o o o

"The Sanitarium should not be established in any city. Future developments will reveal this so plainly that all will understand the meaning of the words that the Lord has given me to speak to you."

--MS--43-1902

In the other manuscript, the following statements occur:

"In the visions of the night I have been writing letters, and I dare not put off longer the work to be done. Night after night I am awakened at eleven, twelve, and one o'clock with a message from the Lord, and I arise at once, and begin to write, fearing that if I do not, I shall forget the instruction given me. Thus it was when I was at Los Angeles. In the night season I was in a council meeting, and the question under consideration was the establishment of a sanitarium in Southern California. One brother urged that it would be best to have the sanitarium in the city of Los Angeles, and he pointed out the objections to establishing the sanitarium out of the city. o o o

"The time has come when those who will be most benefited by our institutions, understand by experience that a city is not the best place in which to establish a sanitarium. Then again, the

outlay for buildings is to be far less than men in their own judgment would decide. Offers of buildings at a low price will be received from men of the world who are favorable to medical missionary work. All these things should be taken into consideration. Take advantage of favorable offers. Often there are offered at a low price country places on which are buildings that could be utilized for sanitarium work. If the grounds are extensive, and if the surroundings are beautified by ornamental and fruit trees, we should consider these as strong reasons why we should secure such places for sanitarium work."

MS-41-1902

In the face of such clear and definite instruction, the plan for building the sanitarium was dropped. The large food factory, however, was built on East First Street. These unwise plans and moves resulted in great financial discouragement. This was one of the reasons why the sanitarium work in Southern California was greatly weakened and delayed.

Perplexed because of the situation created by the abandonment of plans for a large sanitarium in Los Angeles, a few of the leading brethren met at the home of Mrs. White on April 13, 1902, to consider how best to carry out the instruction that had come. In counseling with these brethren, Mrs. White gave added reasons for not building up large sanitariums in the cities.

"Our sanitariums should not be established in the large cities," she said. "According to the light that the Lord has given me, in a little while from now, these cities will be terribly shaken. No matter how large or how strong a building may be, no matter how many safeguards against fire have been provided, if God touches it, in a few moments or in a few hours it is in ruins. Let our sanitarium workers remember that those who establish sanitariums in cities do not reveal wisdom. . . ."

"If a sanitarium is established in a city, the patients are largely prisoners in their rooms. They are shut up within four walls; and if, perchance, they are able to look out of a window, they can see little except houses, houses, houses.

"An invalid confined within four walls is liable to brood over his physical condition. He becomes weary of looking at nothing but the walls of his room. Often he is poisoned by his own breath. These are some of the reasons why I have had no faith in establishing great medical institutions in the large cities!"

MS-86-1902

For a more complete study of the instruction regarding the location of sanitariums, and the nature of the work to be done in them, the reader is referred to "Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 7, pp. 76-87. See also "Medical Ministry."

As a guide in the finding of sanitarium properties like the pattern of heavenly origin the following description was given during this council:

"In the night season, a view of a sanitarium was shown me. The institution was not so very large, but was complete. It was surrounded by beautiful ornamental trees, and beyond these were orange groves. Connected with the place were gardens, in which the women patients, if they chose, could cultivate flowers of every description, each patient selecting a special plot for which to care. Outdoor exercise in these gardens was prescribed as a part of the regular treatment.

"Thus I was instructed by the Lord. Scene after scene passed before me. In one scene there were a number of suffering patients who had just come to one of our country sanitariums. In another I saw the same company, but oh, how transformed. They were walking about, and talking, and appeared happy. Disease had gone, the skin was clear, and the countenance joyful; body and mind seemed full of health." --Id.

Time to Act

In concluding the interview, Mrs. White said:

"I have been instructed to tell our brethren to keep on the lookout for cheap, desirable properties in healthful places suitable for sanitarium purposes." --Id.

She urged that no time be lost in searching for the proper places for the beginning of sanitarium work near the great tourist centers of Southern California, and in establishing a number of sanitariums.

"I have been shown that the present is an opportune time to advance the sanitarium work in Southern California. In the vicinity of such tourist resorts as Los Angeles and San Diego, we should become informed in regard to desirable properties that may be secured at low rates. Instead of investing in one medical institution all the means obtainable, we ought to establish smaller sanitariums in many places. Soon the reputation of the health resorts in Southern California will stand higher than now. NOW is our time to enter that field for the purpose of carrying forward medical missionary work." --Id.

Many Properties Found

At the time these messages were sent, the importance of Southern California as a tourist and health resort was beginning to be appreciated, yet few had any conception of the proportions to which it would grow. Today, we can see the wonderful development and growth of the cities of Southern California. Land values have advanced proportionately, and now

the opportunities for securing advantageous properties that were then available have passed by. As a result of searching for properties such as were described in the Testimonies sent to Southern California, they were able to find no less than thirty, that were offered for sale at discounts ranging from seventy-five to ninety per cent of their value, in rooms from 20 to 200, and offered at prices from three or four thousand dollars to forty thousand.

Counsel Repeated--Why?

It is worthy of note that in the messages sent to Southern California, in 1902, reference is made to the first revelations of sanitarium work first given to Seventh-day Adventist, "thirty-five years ago". It would seem that we had not fully learned some of the lessons that are vital to the prosperity of the medical missionary department of the work. Evidently, special emphasis was placed upon the principles we should be likely to neglect, particularly the necessity for bringing the sick in close touch with God's great store-house of natural remedies; and the purpose of all our work, to extend the knowledge of the message especially given to us. In view of the warning that the perils that came to Jerusalem may be ours, how carefully should we study the pattern, not neglecting the great principles laid down in the early Testimonies regarding the medical missionary work, and the purpose of our medical institutions.