

S. S. AFRICAN PLANET
New York to Walvis Bay
November 3, 1950

Elder J. I. Robison
General Conference of S.D.A.
Takoma Park, Washington 12, D.C.

Dear Elder Robison:

Your letter of October 17th addressed to Brother Wieland and myself reached me in New York the day before we sailed. I was very glad to get it but I must confess that it raised a question that has not been settled and I am wondering if we did the right thing to take this booking without your final approval.

It is very encouraging that the matter which we presented to the brethren has not been passed off lightly. Indeed what has been presented in the manuscript is but the beginning of a study that must be carried through to completion. Africa certainly needs Brother Wieland but my honest conviction is that he is needed more there in Washington to be allowed full time to prepare the corollaries that necessarily follow what has been presented in the manuscript. If it could be arranged that he work for a time in connection with one of the editors of the Review, it would be to the advantage of all concerned. This I think you will understand and appreciate in the light of what has been presented in the manuscript. I would like to see Brother Wieland return to Africa but I consider that the immediate and pressing need is for the completion of related manuscripts which he has already begun and which he could prepare better than anyone at this time—and certainly the hour is late.

I note that you say the brethren "do not in any sense agree" with our conclusions. I hope that this decision has been reached after only a casual reading of the manuscript rather than a real study of it. Some workers outside the committee, respected and in responsible positions, have read the essay and have been greatly stirred by it. It is true that there are many phrases and whole sentences which are not put the best way but the foundation of the manuscript, the premise and the principles involved that must be prayerfully considered.

Your paragraph two of page 2 touches the question which I mentioned in opening this letter. It seems that the committee cleared us to return to Africa contingent upon receiving assurance from us that we would not make the manuscript "a matter of agitation among the workers in the Southern African Division". It follows therefore that I have been rather presumptuous to sail on this ship without the final approval of the brethren. I have done this perhaps for two reasons. First because you said that bookings were rather difficult to get and so to have cancelled this reservation while you were in Fall Council would hardly have been in order. Second, I am not just sure what the brethren mean by agitation. If the matter that has been presented to the General Conference Committee is considered heretical, then under no conditions should we have been cleared to return—or for that matter to continue in the work. If on the other hand it is not heretical, no harm can come to any honest hearted worker who

may read the essay. As you are aware this matter is known in at least two of our divisions—North America and Africa and in both places workers knowing us have been interested in the whole subject. When they inquire of us personally concerning the matter it will be well nigh impossible to just pass it off with no explanation. In fairness to the General Conference Committee, which has sensed the graveness of the present state of modern Israel, a word of explanation should be given. There are also our Division Officers who read our original letter but who since have lost contact with us. Certainly it would not be considered agitation for them to read the manuscript. Outside of these we have nothing to "agitate". Indeed if the General Conference Committee after careful study considers the premise and the conclusion of the paper to be erroneous, there remains no place in this world for us to take the matter and no amount of agitation would avail anything. Last I would say that I am of the opinion that spiritual matters cannot be agitated but rather are discerned as a result of heeding the Holy Spirit.

I hope that you will understand my frank statements on this matter and that they are not too far from the reply that you had anticipated. You may be sure that we are happy to be returning to the work in East Africa. I shall be looking forward to a letter from you at the mission and to hear if it has been possible to arrange for Brother Midland to complete the writings that should be prepared at this time.

With appreciation for the time and kind consideration the brethren gave us on the committee and with Christian greetings, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

D. K. Short