

## Church Organization

The hierarchal and episcopal forms of church governance were wholly unacceptable to the early believers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They naturally had an inclination toward the congregational form of church governance. These pioneers were usually very independent people who had been persecuted by the various churches from which they came. They wanted as much freedom as possible to exercise their religious convictions. However, God did not choose the congregational form of church governance but rather the representative form of church governance for His remnant people. Like Adam and the 24 elders coming before God at an appointed time to represent unfallen worlds. Is this not the form of organizational structure in heaven in Zion and should pass to the church?!

There was division of the field, like, the European field came to be regarded as a self-sufficient continental unit, and it was called the "General Conference in Europe," while the organization in the land of origin was called the "General Conference in America." And there was beside, the Australasian Union Conference [*The Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, Volume 3, p, 348]. As other areas of organization developed, first the local conferences, then the General Conference, much later the unions, and finally the divisions of the General Conference, each one was delegated responsibility. Every level was designated to serve the needs of the level whose representatives had elected its leaders. But ultimately all the levels received their authority from the local churches and served the needs and interests of these rapidly expanding local church communities. The conferences were not only established to serve the needs of the local churches but also, more importantly, to plan and organize the expansion of the work into areas, towns, and cities where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thus developed the representative form of church governance that God had ordained for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Paul can be seen working on this basis of structure and supplying the churches in need from other churches. Even churches who were poor like Macedonian church yet so generous contributed for church in Corinth and Achaia

I think this is the only way to decentralize authority and kingly power that may try to emerge in theocratic organization

*What we want now is reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. [General Conference Bulletin. 1901, p. 25]*

*I want to say that from the light given to me by God, there should have been years ago organizations such as are now proposed. When we first met in conference, it was thought that the General Conference should extend over the whole world. But this is not in God's order: [General Coherence Bulletin, 1901, p. 68]*

Noting the normal organizational pattern seen in worldly corporations, it was naturally thought that the General Conference should have authority over the whole of the work of God around the world. However, God is a decentralist; thus the whole issue of decentralization becomes pivotal to the counsel received by Sister White and transmitted to the delegates at the 1901 General Conference Session.

Conferences must be organized in different localities, and it will be for the health of the different conferences to have it thus. This does not mean that we are to cut ourselves apart from one another, and be as separate atoms or congregationalists. Every conference is to touch every other conference, and be in harmony with every other conference without imposition of creeds,

threatenings of cutting off support and hindering of religious liberty and freedom of expression in controlling conscience. God wants us to talk for this, and He wants us to act for this. We are the people of God, who are to be separate from the world. We are to stand as representatives of sacred truth. [*General Conference Bulletin*. 1901, pp. 68, 69]

We want to understand that there are no gods in our conference. There are to be no kings here, and no kings in any conference that is formed, "All ye are brethren."

*The Lord God of Israel will link us all together. The organizing of new conferences is not to separate us. It is to bind us together. The conferences that are formed are to cling mightily to the Lord, so that through them He can reveal His power.....Remember that God can give wisdom to those who handle His work. It is not necessary to send thousands of miles to ... .. for advice, and then have to .... before an answer can be received. Those who are right on the ground are to decide what shall be done. You know what you have to wrestle with, but those who are thousands of miles away do not know. [General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 69, 70]*

God has warned that great difficulties would result and dangers occur if we place such kingly authority in the hands of men, but the people love the way of the world rather than the way of God.

*The heavenly Teacher inquired; "What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah?" [Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, p. 249]*

Since 1903 the "upright triangle" of the hierarchical form of organization has been given great impetus while the "inverted triangle" of representationalism has greatly been weakened.

The time has come for the members of God's church to re-examine the true principles of church organization at the General Conference level and at all other levels of God's work. We have the right doctrines and message, but these alone are not sufficient. We must also have the right way to implement them. The apostasy and rivalry within the church and independent ministries today is as much a result of abandoning the counsel of the Lord in organization as of rejecting the message of Christ our Righteousness.

It has ever been the object of Satan to induce men to look to other men rather than to God for their leadership. There seem to be, in every organization, those who are anxious to submit unwaveringly to those who have authority and power. Knowing that these two groups complement one another, Satan continually seeks to effect an allegiance that will cause men entrusted with leadership responsibilities to believe that autocratic power is vested in them by God, and others to believe that such power is God-ordained. The latter, with great reverence and respect, believe that God requires them to be unwaveringly loyal to such individuals. Too often, they equate loyalty to God with loyalty to

leaders. Quoted to support such a dangerous belief is the response of David when urged by his men to kill King Saul.

*And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord. 1Samuel 24:6*

The issue which led to David's response must be examined. He was refusing to do physical harm to the anointed of the Lord. This must not be interpreted to say that men should blindly follow leaders who, though anointed of the Lord, have turned their feet away from the pathway and direction of the Lord's counsel. We must rather follow the response of Peter and John when they were confronted with the choice between God-given responsibilities and the direction of human leaders.

*We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29*

We should not forget that blind loyalty to the Lord's anointed led men to cry, "Crucify Him!" These men believed that such loyalty to leaders constituted loyalty to God. What a deception! Yet are we different? Those who would show true loyalty to God and His anointed must place loyalty to their God as paramount.

While all respect and due courtesy pertain in our relationship with those who have leadership responsibility, it is dishonoring to God to blindly follow them or support them if they deviate from His express Word. Men would want to mould the doctrines and beliefs of those under them. This can be seen clearly with the issue of the Truth about God, Nature of Sin, Nature of Christ, Tithes and Offerings etc. This kind of working is what God has rejected and will never finish work in such lines:

*For years the church has been looking to man, and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. [Testimonies to Ministers, p. 93]*

*Let me entreat our state conferences and our churches to cease putting their dependence upon men and making flesh their arm. Look not to other men to see how they conduct themselves under conviction of the truth. ... Our churches are weak because the members are educated to look to and depend upon human resources. [Ibid., p. 380]*

*For years there has been a growing tendency for men placed in positions of responsibility to lord it over God's heritage, thus removing from church members their keen sense of the need of divine instruction and an appreciation of the privilege to counsel with God regarding their duty. [Ibid., p. 477-478]*

The Lord has also given other strong counsels relevant to this issue of kingly power.

*If the heart of the work becomes corrupt, the whole church, in its various branches and interests. Scattered abroad over the face of the earth, suffers in consequence. Satan's chief work is at the headquarters of our faith. He spares no pains to corrupt*

*men in responsible positions and to persuade them to be unfaithful to their several trusts. [Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, p. 210-211]*

*Jerusalem is a representation of what the church will be if it refuses to walk in the light that God has given. Jerusalem was favored of God as the depository of sacred trusts, but her people perverted the truth, and despised all entreaties and warnings. They would not respect His counsels. [Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, p. 67]*

Those who seeking to establish organization should be weary of such issues and not play ignorant of where they are headed thinking God will straighten things when all has been revealing in his word. In 1901, Sister White added these words:

*There are to be more than one or two or three men to consider the whole vast field. The work is great, and there is no one human mind that can plan for the work which needs to be done. [General Conference Bulletin, April 3, 1901]*

As late as 1909 we have this counsel:

*I have been shown that ministers and people are tempted more and more to trust in finite man for wisdom, and to make flesh their arm. To conference presidents, and men in responsible places, I bear this message: Break the bands and fetters that have been placed upon God's people. To you the word is spoken, "Break every yoke." Unless you cease the work of making man amenable to man, unless you become humble in heart, and yourselves learn the way of the Lord as little children, the Lord will divorce you from His work. We are to treat one another as brethren, as fellow laborers, as men and women who are, with us, seeking for light and understanding of the way of the Lord, and who are jealous for His glory. [Testimonies to Ministers, pages 480-481]*

Centralization of power and the increasing domination of leaders over workers, and, in turn, pastors over members, unquestionably have sped the flooding of apostasy into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. God is calling for His people to reorganize according to His pattern, so that the light of truth may be able to shine with all its glory at the end of time. Not only does the Seventh-day Adventist Church need repentance and reformation in the area of truth and righteousness, but it also sorely needs reformation in the area of church administration and authority. Independent ministries are not excepted. The current General Conference is just but a smaller organization in a larger Advent movement but they have assumed to be the church and arbiters of truth and punishers of heretics. When you hear independent ministries would want to pattern after the current GC, it makes one tremble, it seems that we may sink lower than we have ever sank if we are not discerning the future. Let it be so clear am not speaking of any ministry but the larger Adventist movement as a whole.

### Hierarchicalism

It is evident that the organization that God wanted for His church was the antithesis of Hierarchicalism, we don't need another papal institution. In his book, *The Supremacy of Peter* (Review and Herald, 1898), M. E. Kellogg exposes the error of the papal:

*It has been proved in the preceding chapters that the idea of a primacy is unknown in the Scriptures, and that the primacy which was established, was only accomplished*

*by unholy ambition and an unchristian seeking for spiritual supremacy, entirely foreign to the spirit and teachings of Christ and His apostles; we have also seen that it was accomplished after long centuries of plotting and scheming, and especially by the union of this then apostate church with the Roman state, and that it finally resulted in bringing the Roman state and many other states under the control of the church; that a large part of the Christian church always protested against it; and that the separation between the churches of the East and the West in the eleventh century was to some extent over this question; for the Eastern Church never accepted the supremacy of the bishop of Rome. Since that time, numerous bodies of Christians have denied the doctrine of the primacy. The great reformers of the sixteenth century made the denial of the primacy a cardinal feature of their work, and it is held by none but by the Roman Catholic Church. This church firmly maintains this doctrine as a fundamental portion of its creed. (M. E. Kellogg, *The Supremacy of Peter*, pp. 259, 260).*

In further commenting upon this, M. E. Kellogg said:

*There is to be no primacy. The gospel is designed for all the world. Churches are to be raised everywhere, but there is no provision in the Christian system whereby one man, or a conclave of men in continual session, is to take the charge of the work of the gospel in all the world. Such a task would be entirely beyond the capacity of man. The world is large; and the idea that one man, or one body of men, could take into consideration the spiritual needs of all believers in Christ, or the spiritual needs of many thousands of believers in Christ, which are scattered throughout the world, is preposterous. [Ibid., p. 260]*

It has been a great *grief* to many Seventh-day Adventists that leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in two well-publicized court cases, have argued from the perspective of a hierarchic structure in their endeavor to win the favorable decision of the court. This happened in the Merikay Silver case in California in her suit against Pacific Press in the 1970s, and again in the case of Derek Proctor (an Andrews University professor) in his suit against the General Conference. Here is a summary of the Proctor case:

*Dr. Derek Proctor's long-running lawsuit with the Seventh-day Adventist Church was finally decided on October 29, 1986. Proctor lost the case, in which he contended that the church in various of its entities conspired illegally to interfere in his book-selling business in violation of antitrust and conspiracy laws. The major strategy of the General Conference in this case was to convince the court that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is essentially an hierarchical church, in which the directives and orders of the General Conference have binding authority upon all other entities of the church. The General Conference submitted that, "next to the Roman Catholic Church, the Adventist Church is the most centralized of all major Christian denominations in this country" Student Movement, [Student paper of Andrews University, November 6, 1986]*

The central theme of the Merikay case is as follows:

*Although it is true that there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman*

*Catholic viewpoint, and the term "hierarchy" was used in a pejorative sense to refer to the papal form of the church governance, that attitude on the church's part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread anti-papery among conservative Protestant denominations in the early part of this century, and the latter part of the last, which has now been consigned to the historical trash heap as far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned. Sworn affidavit of Neal C. Wilson, vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in The problem is that a hierarchical system suggests a ladder of importance from GC down to local church. It implies that transferring from church pastor to an administrative position is "a move up the ladder," while this vice versa is a "demotion." And a hierarchal system also makes it easier for a lot of attention to focus on the president of that system. But even this is not necessarily a problem.*

*However, it does raise questions of perspective when the General Conference president is repeatedly referred to as "President Folkenberg." And when an Adventist refers to Mrs. Folkenberg as the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "FIRST LADY," it makes you wonder. It probably has the same effect on Mrs. Folkenberg, who appears to be a particularly self-effacing, humble woman. [South Pacific Record, August 4, 1990, p. 2]*

The evidence is gaining momentum and is too strong to be ignored. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is following the hierarchal pattern of the Roman Catholic Church. It is time for a mighty reformation. Laity and ministry alike need to earnestly work together to reverse this most dangerous situation and so anything that insinuates to the current GC construction should be shunned as leprosy.

### Early Christian Church

The Gospel of Mark presents the most direct record of the first Christian ordination service.

*And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils. Mark 3:13-15*

Thus, Jesus Himself ordained the first workers in the Christian church. He ordained them to be apostles with a two-fold mission: 1) to preach, and 2) to heal. Apart from Christ, the disciples were the first medical missionaries of the Christian church. Matthew and Luke give further insights into the mission of the apostles.

*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Matthew 10:5-8*

*Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves,*

*nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where. Luke 9:1-6*

In sending the apostles to preach and to heal, Jesus gave them His very own ministry.

*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. Matthew 4:23*

*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mark 1: 14,15*

Though the apostles were still immature in their understanding and in their training, Jesus sent them out to experience the power of preaching and to share the great gospel. He ordained them to preach the gospel of the kingdom. They could not at this time have had a full understanding of the gospel because of their own inadequate understanding even of the mission and ministry of Christ. Nevertheless, they could declare Jesus as the promised Messiah, the one who would establish His kingdom. Not until later did they understand the fullness of this message. The words of Christ to them just before His crucifixion, recorded in the great Second Advent chapter of Matthew, must have been imbedded in their minds until their deaths.

*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matthew 24:14*

John not even Paul was privileged more than any other to understand the nature of this gospel.

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fount a i n s o f w a t e r s . R e v e l a t i o n 14:6,7*

Paul also understood that in certain circumstances it would be appropriate to financially support these elders.

*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. I Timothy 5: I 7,18*

The role of an elder was an extraordinarily important one. It included:

- 1) The leadership of the church,
- 2) The teaching of doctrine to the church members,
- 3) The anointing of the sick (see James 5:14).

The three basic roles of the church leaders in early apostolic times were,

- 1) The apostles, being the evangelists, who were placed in the vanguard of soul winning,
- 2) The deacons who cared for the physical and emotional needs of the congregation, and
- 3) The elders who were responsible leaders of the local church community.

The women in the early Christian church also fulfilled specific roles. We know of the ministry of Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira. (Acts 16:14,15) Also, we see the wonderful testimony concerning Dorcas of Joppa, a woman "of good works and deeds." (Acts 9:36) She became the role model for every deaconess.

The early Christian church developed the major roles needed to care for the mental, spiritual, and physical needs of the members of God's church and for the church's evangelistic thrusts. This is the paradigm for God's church today. God ordained this organization to fulfill the mission and ministry of His end-time church.

#### Divine Form of Church Governance

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began its mission of destiny, the members, coming from various churches in the United States, naturally had different views on the structure and governance of the emerging church. They considered basically three forms of church governance. The first was the hierarchal form of church governance. This was also known as the papal form, for all Protestant churches had rejected this form of church organization.

The hierarchal form of church governance is built upon an individual or a small committee, who is/are responsible for making the major, momentous decisions of the church. The Roman Catholic Church is the archetype of hierarchal church governance. At the head of this church its leader, the pope, when speaking *ex cathedra* (from the throne), has absolute authority. Whether by a papal bull or by a papal encyclical, the pope's directives are expected to be accepted without modifications, additions, or deletions. Enforcing this expectation has not always been easy for the Roman Catholic Church. This was especially true during the nineteenth century, when the papal influence reached an unprecedented low. To help strengthen papal authority, the longest-reigning pope in history, Pius IX, put forward the doctrine of papal infallibility. That doctrine was meant to add the weight of divine authority to the pontifical pronouncements. This doctrine of infallibility was not accepted without considerable opposition, but its proponents eventually prevailed.

In the hierarchal system the leader makes the decisions. These directives are expected to pass down through the archdiocese (archbishopric) to the diocese (bishopric) to the local parish congregations without modification or change of any kind. The dictates of the leader are binding upon all members of the church. We live in an age where not a few are challenging such absolute authority; nevertheless, most Roman Catholics around the world accept the edicts of the pope as final and non-negotiable. This is the most subtle of all church structure. The

people at the top have no advisor but themselves, not subordinate to anyone but their beliefs and others have to role-play active part in running affairs.

The episcopal form of governance was also known at the time of the commencement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Anglican Church in England developed this form, and the Episcopal Church of America carried it on after the Declaration of American Independence. Such a system has no supreme pontiff; the authority resides at the level of the bishop.

In England, for example, there are well over 500 such bishops, but only two archbishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York. While the Archbishop of Canterbury is called the primate of Great Britain, the reigning monarch is the leader of the Anglican Church; decision-making authority is vested at the level of the diocese in the hands of the bishops. The episcopal form of church governance has some of the elements of the hierarchal system, but is less centralized. Each bishop is almost a law unto himself in terms of his authority. Naturally, some bishops exercise more autocratic authority than do others, but the running of the dioceses are largely in their hands. Anything that is half Rome is Rome indeed and soon what would follow?! In recent years, the Anglican Church has felt a deep frustration with this form of governance. Indeed, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, urged the Anglican Church to reunite with the Church of Rome under a reformed Papacy. In a sense, the Anglican Church structure is readily adaptable to this reunion for it already possesses a modified hierarchal structure.

The third form of church governance known to the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the congregational form. Here every church had its own autonomy. One can see this kind of governance best in the Congregational Church, the Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, and similar churches. While a loose organization exists among these churches, nevertheless, each church has its own autonomy. For example, the church congregation has the right to hire or fire its own pastor. The church handles its own finances and accepts special missionary projects. It is not uncommon for a church to sponsor a missionary family overseas and guarantee its financial needs.

The hierarchal and episcopal forms of church governance were wholly unacceptable to the early believers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They naturally had an inclination toward the congregational form of church governance. These pioneers were usually very independent people who had been persecuted by the various churches from which they came. They wanted as much freedom as possible to exercise their religious convictions. However, God did not choose the congregational form of church governance but rather the representative form of church governance for His remnant people. Like Adam and the 24 elders coming before God at an appointed time to represent unfallen worlds. Is this not the form of organizational structure in heaven in Zion and should pass to the church?!

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needs of the level whose representatives had elected its leaders. But ultimately all the levels received their authority from the local churches and served the needs and interests of these rapidly expanding local church communities. The conferences were not only established to serve the needs of the local churches but also, more importantly, to plan and organize the expansion of the work into areas, towns, and cities where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thus developed the representative form of church governance that God had ordained for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Paul can be seen working on this basis of structure and supplying the churches in need from other churches. Even churches who were poor like Macedonian church yet so generous contributed for church in Corinth and Achaia

In this form of church governance, the emerging structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had most of its authority placed in the hands of the local churches. The churches had the responsibility to accept new members. Once they became the members of the local church community they were members of the church at large, or what later became the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. The local churches alone had the responsibility to discipline unfaithful members. The local church was specifically responsible for the missionary endeavors within the region of its locality, whether it be a rural region or a town or city. Indeed, the whole authority of the church had its base in the local church community, as will be seen in subsequent chapters of this book.

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In so ordaining, God gave a form of governance that allowed for checks and balances, and which was meant to decentralize the levels of authority. While today we still have the vestiges of the representative form of church governance, alas, in reality we have shifted alarmingly toward the hierarchal form. In so doing, we wittingly or unwittingly rebel against God.

**The Development of Structure In the Seventh-day Adventist Church**  
After the Great Disappointment of 1844, individuals, families, and in some cases small groups of Adventists were scattered around the United States, especially in the New England area and upstate New York. However, these Adventists fragmented from each other very quickly. They divided into Sabbathkeeping and Sunday-keeping groups. Later, the issue of the Spirit of Prophecy caused other schisms to take place. Those who did remain true to the revelations of the Advent Message became fervent in missionary work. However, so few and so scattered were these early Adventist groups that they are often referred to by Sister White as the "little flock" or the "scattered flock." As more joined the ranks of God's remnant church, little church buildings began to materialize—some of them not larger than sufficient to contain a

congregation of thirty to sixty and there is a reason why thirty was a good number. Usually, they were little weatherboard churches, but the Holy Spirit was unquestionably manifest in a mighty way in those churches. Each of those churches became a light to spread the truth in its immediate region.

It soon became obvious, however, that though this helped, there needed to be an organized structure that could plan more directly to expand the message of salvation into regions where no Seventh-day Adventist presence existed. Thus, in 1861, the first state conference was established, the Michigan Conference. It is of no little interest that a chairman rather than a president was chosen for the Michigan Conference. Joseph Bates was the chosen chairman of the conference. This was in line with the desire to avoid any semblance of a papal form of governance. The people did not want a "king" to rule over them. They considered that concept to be wholly out of harmony with the governance that God had ordained.

Now the work of God could be planned better in order to send workers into unentered towns, cities, and counties. In this way, God's workers hoped to establish new church communities all around the conferences. This plan worked very effectively, and soon they organized quite a number of other conferences, among them Ohio, Iowa, and Kansas. This broader base of organization made it possible for the work of God to expand quite quickly.

However, even that did not provide planning for states where an Adventist presence had not already been established. Conferences had been established only in states where a number of strong, viable churches already existed. As the population of the United States rapidly moved westward into the frontier territories, God's people saw that such conferences obviously did nothing to accommodate the new emerging populations in the West. They needed an organization to foster the message in unentered regions. The issue of the Civil War also proved a factor. During this war, government authorities gave Adventist young men a very difficult time because of their determination not to participate. Thus, they realized a need to establish a General Conference which would plan the work with a broad base and be able to foster the development of new missionary effort in other parts of the United States. A General Conference would also give our young men a legal basis for their conscientious stand against participation in war. A third factor influencing the need for a General Conference was the need for a legal body to hold title to certain church properties such as the conference offices and the publishing houses.

Notwithstanding the fact that God had confirmed the need for the organization of the General Conference, fierce opposition to its development arose. Some claimed that James White was seeking power. Because of this opposition, James White refused to become the first president of the General Conference, and that honor was accorded to John Byington, a less-known, older leader of the emerging Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It will be recalled that the establishment of the General Conference took place long before the sending out of the first missionary beyond the shores of North America. Indeed, it was formed before there was an Adventist presence of any significance in most of the United States.

As the mission efforts of the 1870s and 1880s brought a worldwide presence to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it was clear that even the organizations of local churches, local conferences, and the General Conference did not give adequate opportunity for expansion and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At one stage in the 1880s, loose districts were established in the United States which covered large regions of the country.

#### No Church Pastors Per Se

In the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God's people made no plans for church pastors as we know them today. As the infant church developed, the ministers itinerated between the little companies of believers, bringing inspiration and understanding to the precious souls. However, as churches began to multiply, and the congregations began to increase, a desire naturally arose to have full-time gospel workers associated with these churches. The pattern in the fallen churches of Protestantism was very clear. Each major church congregation had its own pastor, and if it were large enough, several pastors. Each small church shared a pastor with one or more other churches, but each had a pastor.

As would be expected, some of those in the new Adventist Church looked to pattern the work of the Seventh-day Adventist ministry after the churches from which they had come. But Sister White insisted that the role of the minister, as in apostolic times, was to move into new territories in order to enter into front-line evangelism where the message was non-existent or particularly weak.

*When the ministers understand the great blessing to be derived from laboring for those who know not the truth, they will leave the churches. after impressing upon them the importance of devising plans and methods whereby they can do within their borders the same kind of work that the ministers of the gospel are doing in the regions beyond. [Medical Ministry, p. 318]*

*Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: "Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields." [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6. p. 30]*

*As a general rule, the conference laborers should go out from the churches into new fields, using their God-given ability to a purpose in seeking and saving the lost. [Evangelism, p. 382]*

*If the ministers would get out of the way, if they would go forth into new fields, the members would be obliged to bear responsibilities, and their capabilities would increase by use. [Ibid.]*

## No Settled Pastors

*“We have no settled pastors over our churches; but our ministers are all missionaries, as were the early ministers of Jesus Christ, consequently they are most of their time deprived of the blessings of home. For Christ’s sake, and for the salvation of their fellow-men, they sacrifice the society of dear ones at home, go forth into a cold, selfish world, and wear out their lives in preaching unpopular Bible truth. God bless them! But they must be sustained, and God has made it the duty of the church to support them, as they go on their mission of love. . . While a great work is before the church, the time that remains in which to accomplish it must be short. The last events of prophecy are being fulfilled, and the last warnings for the church are being given. . . Our ministers must be regarded as very economical in their expenses, and abundant in their labors. Most of them preach from two to three hundred discourses in a year. And it is a painful fact that they often suffer hardships, care and deprivation for want of means.” James White, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, June 9, 1859, p. 21*

*The Signs of the Times, a witnessing magazine, was published from 1874 through 1979. In the December 17, 1874 issue, Uriah Smith wrote an article titled “The Seventh-day Adventists. A Brief Sketch of their Origin, Progress, and Principles.” In explaining how the Seventh-day Adventists organized their local churches as they were planted, he wrote “This is exceedingly simple. A body of believers associate together, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, and attaching their names to a covenant simply to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The Bible is their only creed. A clerk is chosen to keep the records of the church, and an elder, elected by vote of the church, is ordained to look after its spiritual interests. If the church is large, its temporal affairs are assigned to one or more deacons chosen by vote of the church for this purpose. . . None of the churches have pastors established with them. They maintain their worship without the aid of a preacher, only as one may occasionally visit them, leaving the ministers free to devote almost their whole time to carrying these views to those who have never heard upon them.” Uriah Smith, The Signs of the Times, Volume 1, Number 11, December 17, 1874. p. 84.*

*In 1886 she wrote, “Do not, my ministering brethren, allow yourselves to be kept at home to serve tables; and do not hover around the churches, preaching to those who are already fully established in the faith. Teach the people to have light in themselves, and not to depend upon the ministers. They should have Christ as their helper, and should educate themselves to help one another, so that the minister can be free to enter new fields. An important work is to be done in the world. New fields are to be opened; and the zeal and the missionary spirit that Christ manifested are greatly needed. Oh that the power of God would set the truth home to every heart! Oh that all might see the necessity of having a living connection with God, and of knowing and doing his will from day to day!” Ellen White, Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists: (Basie: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886,) 139.*

*“We have not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent. In some of the very large churches we have elected pastors, but as a rule we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work and our brethren and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry forward their church work without settled pastors. And I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken, and lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized and our work will be on a retreat.” A. G. Daniels, Pacific Union Recorder, Vol. 11, No. 01, April 4, 1912, paragraph 2*

*“Now when I entered upon the ministry, I never expected to do anything else but preach the message in new fields. I had not the remotest idea of anything else. It never entered into my head nor heart, nor was it a desire. I had one thought, and that was to go out and preach the third angel's message to people who did not know it. I did not think of anything else for a long time. As any man of any reason would do, I began to study how to do that work most successfully. That led me to study methods of labor, policies, ways of working; and. I will say, brethren, that for a dozen years, or thirteen I think it was, my whole time was spent in what we may call the field work, evangelistic, endeavor. I had no conference responsibilities, nothing in the way of administration. I was just plowing, plowing, plowing, all the time, in new fields.” A. G. Daniels, Pacific Union Recorder, Vol. 11, No. 01, April 4, 1912, paragraph 6*

*“The genius of our work is that we are convert conscious. A woe is upon us if we preach not the gospel. Onward, ever onward, is the overpowering Adventist pre-possession. We cannot settle down, we cannot think in terms of appointing full-time ministers to care for little flocks. Their job is to provide an outreach to lead the people themselves into a witnessing program. They are not to settle down like mother hens over little chicks and warm the people with their presence. They are to teach the people how they can warm their own hearts through experiences in soul-winning work. Nevertheless, elders are to be appointed in every church. Laymen are to be the ones in charge . Delafield, D. A., Letter to Pastor Jere Webb, May 15, 1980, Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, DC.*

Thus, the early Seventh-day Adventist church began to develop district pastors. These were not district pastors as we understand them today—pastors in charge of two or more churches—but rather pastors who were each appointed to an area in which to conduct evangelistic meetings. It became common for the conferences to divide their territories up into districts and to appoint a pastor to proclaim the Word in each district.

We had the privilege to grow up, until the age of about fourteen, while this system was still employed in the work of God in Australia. (This system apparently changed earlier in the United States than in Australia.) We were also privileged to have for our father the "young" elder of the Hamilton Church in the city of Newcastle, Australia. This permitted us as lads to gain an understanding of

the function of the pastor and of the officers of the church in such an organizational pattern.

A pastor would be appointed to a district. If it was in a city, it would be a city district. Our city of Newcastle at that time had a population of about a quarter of a million people, and so was considered one district. In the more rural areas, a pastor would be appointed to a district which might contain three or four sizeable towns. The major function of the pastor was that of proclaiming the Word of God to those not of our faith. The pastor would locate within the district. If assigned to a rural district, he would conduct a five- to six-months crusade in one town, usually holding meetings two nights a week and spending the rest of the time in visitation, presentation of Bible studies, and other soul-winning activities. He would then likely hold a crusade in a different town in his rural district each succeeding year until being transferred to another district. The evangelist appointed to a city district might also hold a crusade for five or six months of each year, but in varying suburbs instead of towns. After three or four years, the pastor in either type of district was usually transferred to another district. It was usual for the pastor and his family to become members of one of the churches within the district.

The deacons do little more than take up the offering, occasionally do a little busy-bee work around the church, and assist with an ordinance or a baptism. The ministry for which they are called and ordained is never fulfilled. The same is true of the elders. The responsibility of eldership in many churches has become not much more than a ceremonial post with the elders announcing a hymn, reading announcements, and offering corporate prayer, but in no wise giving the spiritual leadership for which they were ordained.

Finally, by ministers filling roles for which they were not ordained or called, they sometimes go through a whole year without bringing one soul to the Lord. That is not fair to the ministers, for others' respect for them generally drops dramatically as a result of this alteration of roles. It is certainly not fair to the laity, either. We make an earnest plea for our church to return to the pattern that God has ordained.

The whole purpose of church organization is to facilitate the mission and destiny of the church. This includes the following goals:

1. To facilitate the spiritual growth of the members of the church;
2. To retrain the members of the church in effective soul-winning witness;
3. To prepare a people to receive the latter rain;
4. Under the power of the Holy Spirit to take the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people;
5. To prepare a people who will stand unflinchingly during the time of Jacob's trouble.

The mission of the church is here demonstrated to be soul winning in focus. To accomplish these goals God has entrusted His end-time truth exclusively to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and He has provided an organizational structure that, rather than hampering these soul-winning goals, provides the fullest opportunities for their perfect implementation. Without following the God-given organizational structure it is impossible to accomplish the church's mission.

Thus it is essential that we constantly review our church's structure at all levels, in the light of Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy directions.

We have fallen far away from God's paradigm. Sadly we have followed the practices of the fallen churches of Babylon. The ministry concentrates its efforts on the spreading of the gospel in those places where there is little or no witness to the everlasting gospel. However, following the faulted principles of the fallen churches of Babylon, we have chosen rather to concentrate the effort of the ministry upon nurturing those who already have been long exposed to the truth. This has led to two catastrophic consequences—

- 1) The members of the church have tended to become man-dependent, spiritually indolent and ineffective witnesses, and,
- 2) We have largely left those areas without a Seventh-day Adventist presence to continue in ignorance of the three angels' messages.

The apostolic model is truly important. The apostles (ministers), while not neglecting the flock that they had raised up in various places, nevertheless continued to press forward bringing the gospel into new regions. Once established, they set up elders from the congregation to nurture the flock and to lead the flock in soul-winning efforts in the city, town, village or district in which the community of the faithful lived.

This then freed the minister to move to another region where truth had not been established to raise up yet another company of believers. The amount of time spent in each area was dependent upon the establishment of local leadership who understood God's truth and the speed with which the minister had been able to train the members of the new church in effective witnessing so that they could fulfill, in their sphere of influence, the continuing progress of the gospel within range of the location of the church.

It was always meant that the members would attend the church closest to where they lived that they might provide the fabric for a strong outreach with the church acting as a lighthouse in that area to attract others to the gospel truth. Too often today members travel long distances to go to the church of their choice far removed from their local habitation. Therefore they are largely unable to play the role that God has ordained the local community to fulfill.

With these alarming developments both the ministry and the laity have, to a great extent, lost their direction, their vision, their purpose and their soul-winning ministry. While ever the pastor baby-sits the church members, there is little time left to prosper the soul winning objectives of the pastoral ministry. While ever the laity are baby-sat by the pastor, they fail to grow and develop in their ministry. Thus the Lord gave many counsels urging that the pastors leave the churches after thoroughly preparing the members for their role in spreading the gospel in the local community. The pastors are then free to launch out in new fields where God's work can be prospered.

When we review the many counsels that Sister White presented to the church, urging ministers against hovering over the church, it is sad to realize just how our insubordination in organizational structure has hindered rather than facilitated the entire mission of God's church.

*Undoubtedly, churches that go by the Bible value the testimony of Jesus through the Biblical gift of prophecy. They should be interested in studying how they might restore the leadership model Christ so providentially gave to His remnant church. A reformation of the leadership of the local church may be a powerful catalyst to encourage a mission-driven lay movement that would contribute to the coming great worldwide revival of Revelation 18. –Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership for the Local Church? By P. Gerard Damsteegt*

One of the jobs of the minister is to train the member as he is raising up the church so that when he leaves it in the hands of an elder it is a strong functioning church so this work should be mostly accomplished before an elder is put in place this does not negate the fact that ministers will still stop in occasionally to give messages and counsel as well they need a place to worship on Sabbath after all. Hovering takes place after the church has been raised up and organized and the pastor continues to put most of his time in that church as its easy lazy work. The ministers of such time as this have to move in the fields rather baby-sitting adults who can feed themselves. Paul laments:

*Hebrews 5:12: For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13: For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14: But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

*Hebrews:6:1: Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2: Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3: And this will we do, if God permit.*

There is all too much sermonizing and theory in the current independent movements, and in the SDA movement at large. There is very little emphasis on organizing the congregation for service so that each person knows what their role is and they can work together.

*“God is gathering laypeople around the world for a final movement at the climax of earth’s history. But if this lay movement is going to fulfill its destiny in this generation, it will require rethinking the role of the local pastor and the local church. It will necessitate recapturing the biblical role of the pastor. It calls for a radically new understanding of the church.” “The major role of the pastor is to equip members as disciples of Christ to use their gifts in witness for the Master. Jesus focused most of His attention equipping His disciples to be powerful leaders and soul-winning evangelists.” “Any pastor who does not place priority in equipping members to both discover and use their spiritual gifts in service is not fulfilling their biblical role as pastor.” –Adventist Review Magazine, August 12, 2010)*

*“Until the early twentieth century Adventism did not have settled pastors, but traveling pastor/evangelists who appointed local leadership.” –George R. Knight, If I Were the Devil, p. 189*

I have come to the conclusion that the organization that God gave us if the people had surrendered to God would be like a machine that goes faster and faster. I'm impressed that things can really take off if we see it and surrender.

### Elders

*1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

*1 Corinthians 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things. 12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 DO YE NOT KNOW THAT THEY WHICH MINISTER ABOUT HOLY THINGS LIVE OF THE THINGS OF THE TEMPLE? AND THEY WHICH WAIT AT THE ALTAR ARE PARTAKERS WITH THE ALTAR? 14 EVEN SO HATH THE LORD ORDAINED THAT THEY WHICH PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE OF THE GOSPEL. 15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*

*Deuteronomy 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. You can notice that the same way Paul uses the verse to elders he uses to apostles and it was in line with the temple tithes and offerings*

### Deacons Work

*Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte*

*of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

### Elders work

*Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:*

*1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*

*1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*

So the deacons concentrated on benovelent work while elders labored in doctrine and were paid from tithes. Some deacons were also evangelists like Phillip that's why some think people think elders and deacons were same sometimes. Deacons had more of administrative work than evangelism. Administrative work was not paid from tithes it was more of volunteer work. The language used is double honor is not bout administrative but doctrinal notice the words "especially those who labor in doctrine" . So we had elders as deacons doing administrative work and elders who were evangelists appointed for local church. Paul says to Timothy, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.' 1Tim.5:17.

Here were some laboring in word and doctrine who are called elders; but such labor shows them to be evangelists, it being especially their work; hence evangelists are sometimes called elders; but only, of course, when acting in that capacity.

### Relation of Church Officers

*If this principle be correct, we may lay down the following general rule: that no person by virtue of a lower office can fill a higher one; but any one filling a higher office, can by virtue of that office, act in any of the lower.*

Thus a deacon cannot by virtue of his deaconship, act as an elder, nor an elder as an evangelist, nor an evangelist as an apostle; but an apostle can act as evangelist, elder, or deacon; an evangelist, as an elder or deacon; and an elder as a deacon.

We do not here speak of apostles and evangelists as officers of individual churches; for this is not the position they occupy, their calling making it necessary for them to move in a wider sphere; namely, to have, if apostles, the oversight of the churches. and if evangelists to labor to raise up churches in new fields. These, in our judgment, are the only officers qualified to organize churches.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the officers of the church which are appointed solely by the church itself are reduced to two; namely, elders and deacons. From what then has arisen so much confusion upon the subject? It must be from the fact that the different names of elder, bishop, and pastor, are applied to the same office, and also from overlooking the principle that a person holding any one of the higher offices is qualified to officiate in any of the lower; and when performing the duties of such office is called by the title applying thereto. Thus Peter, though an apostle, calls himself an elder [1Peter 5:1]; and Paul, carrying the liberalities of the brethren up to Jerusalem [Acts 11:30], might with equal propriety be called a deacon. In 2Cor.8:4, he is spoken of as performing the office of a deacon. The brethren prayed him to 'take upon himself the fellowship of the ministering [Greek, diakonos, deaconship], to the saints;' which he did. Verse 19, 20. Evangelists, also, are called elders. Paul says to Timothy, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.' 1Tim.5:17. Here were some laboring in word and doctrine who are called elders; but such labor shows them to be evangelists, it being especially their work; hence evangelists are sometimes called elders; but only, of course, when acting in that capacity. In our churches today, the pastors are playing the role of elders; the elders, the role of deacons; the deacons, the role of janitors; and the members the role of visitors. And those we deem are really doing the work are actually in administrative positions and once a called person starts administrative duties, they should go back to being local deacons and be relieved from active evangelism and being paid by tithe.

*“Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: “Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields.” –Ev 382.1*

There is so much emphasis on the doctrines and preaching to the choir that the work is retarded. The organizational structure being compromised is what largely led to doctrinal errors. But today people are dealing with errors strictly through preaching and debating sides. Councils were meant to be for this purpose, but going way back to 1888, we started departing from this. Butler and Smith refused to council with Jones and Waggoner, and the Review and Herald and Signs of the Times were in opposition. We need to go back to where we first started leaving Jesus and advance from that point forward. This maybe the right scripture to start guiding us:

*Malachi 3:16: Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. Mal:3:17: And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Mal:3:18: Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*

*Jeremiah 6:16a: Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

### *Singleness of Purpose*

*In the life of Christ, everything was made subordinate to His work, the great work of redemption which He came to accomplish. And the same devotion, the same self-denial and sacrifice, the same subjection to the claims of the word of God, is to be manifest in His disciples. {HDL 48.1}*

*Everyone who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour will long for the privilege of serving God. Contemplating what heaven has done for him, his heart is moved with boundless love and adoring gratitude. He is eager to signalize his gratitude by devoting his abilities to God's service. He longs to show his love for Christ and for His purchased possession. He covets toil, hardship, sacrifice. {HDL 48.2}*

*The true worker for God will do his best, because in so doing he can glorify his Master. He will do right in order to regard the requirements of God. He will endeavor to improve all his faculties. He will perform every duty as unto God. His one desire will be that Christ may receive homage and perfect service. {HDL 48.3}*

*There is a picture representing a bullock standing between a plow and an altar, with the inscription, "Ready for either," ready to toil in the furrow or to be offered on the altar of sacrifice. This is the position of the true child of God—willing to go where duty calls, to deny self, to sacrifice for the Redeemer's cause. {HDL 49.1}*

But while others are saying "We will not walk therein" [Jeremiah 6:16b], we should have a people are ready to take the mantle of Elijah as Elisha did it.

*Many long for special talent with which to do a wonderful work, while the duties lying close at hand, the performance of which would make the life fragrant, are lost sight of. Let such ones take up the duties lying directly in their pathway. Success depends not so much on talent as on energy and willingness. It is not the possession of splendid talents that enables us to render acceptable service, but the conscientious performance of daily duties, the contented spirit, the unaffected, sincere interest in the welfare of others. In the humblest lot true excellence may be found. The commonest tasks, wrought with loving faithfulness, are beautiful in God's sight. {PK 219.2}*

*As Elijah, divinely directed in seeking a successor, passed the field in which Elisha was plowing, he cast upon the young man's shoulders the mantle of consecration. During the famine the family of Shaphat had become familiar with the work and mission of Elijah, and now the Spirit of God impressed Elisha's heart as to the meaning of the prophet's act. To him it was the signal that God had called him to be the successor of Elijah. {PK 219.3}*

*"And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." "Go back again,"*

was Elijah's answer, "for what have I done to thee?" This was not a repulse, but a test of faith. Elisha must count the cost--decide for himself to accept or reject the call. If his desires clung to his home and its advantages, he was at liberty to remain there. But Elisha understood the meaning of the call. He knew it was from God, and he did not hesitate to obey. Not for any worldly advantage would he forgo the opportunity of becoming God's messenger or sacrifice the privilege of association with His servant. He "took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him." 1 Kings 19:20, 21. Without hesitation he left a home where he was beloved, to attend the prophet in his uncertain life. {PK 220.1}

Had Elisha asked Elijah what was expected of him,--what would be his work,--he would have been answered: God knows; He will make it known to you. If you wait upon the Lord, He will answer your every question. You may come with me if you have evidence that God has called you. Know for yourself that God stands back of me, and that it is His voice you hear. If you can count everything but dross that you may win the favor of God, come. {PK 220.2}

Similar to the call that came to Elisha was the answer given by Christ to the young ruler who asked Him the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" "If thou wilt be perfect," Christ replied, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Matthew 19:16, 21. {PK 221.1}

Elisha accepted the call to service, casting no backward glance at the pleasures and comforts he was leaving. The young ruler, when he heard the Saviour's words, "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Verse 22. He was not willing to make the sacrifice. His love for his possessions was greater than his love for God. By his refusal to renounce all for Christ, he proved himself unworthy of a place in the Master's service. {PK 221.2}

The call to place all on the altar of service comes to each one. We are not all asked to serve as Elisha served, nor are we all bidden to sell everything we have; but God asks us to give His service the first place in our lives, to allow no day to pass without doing something to advance His work in the earth. He does not expect from all the same kind of service. One may be called to ministry in a foreign land; another may be asked to give of his means for the support of gospel work. God accepts the offering of each. It is the consecration of the life and all its interests, that is necessary. Those who make this consecration will hear and obey the call of Heaven. {PK 221.3}

To everyone who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot, saying, "Here am I; send me." Whether a man be a minister of the Word or a physician, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic, the responsibility rests upon him. It is his work to reveal to others the gospel of their

salvation. Every enterprise in which he engages should be a means to this end. {PK 222.1}

It was no great work that was at first required of Elisha; commonplace duties still constituted his discipline. He is spoken of as pouring water on the hands of Elijah, his master. He was willing to do anything that the Lord directed, and at every step he learned lessons of humility and service. As the prophet's personal attendant, he continued to prove faithful in little things, while with daily strengthening purpose he devoted himself to the mission appointed him by God. {PK 222.2}

Elisha's life after uniting with Elijah was not without temptations. Trials he had in abundance; but in every emergency he relied on God. He was tempted to think of the home that he had left, but to this temptation he gave no heed. Having put his hand to the plow, he was resolved not to turn back, and through test and trial he proved true to his trust. {PK 222.3}

Ministry comprehends far more than preaching the word. It means training young men as Elijah trained Elisha, taking them from their ordinary duties, and giving them responsibilities to bear in God's work--small responsibilities at first, and larger ones as they gain strength and experience. There are in the ministry men of faith and prayer, men who can say, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1-3. Young, inexperienced workers should be trained by actual labor in connection with these experienced servants of God. Thus they will learn how to bear burdens. {PK 222.4}

Those who undertake this training of young workers are doing noble service. The Lord Himself co-operates with their efforts. And the young men to whom the word of consecration has been spoken, whose privilege it is to be brought into close association with earnest, godly workers, should make the most of their opportunity. God has honored them by choosing them for His service and by placing them where they can gain greater fitness for it, and they should be humble, faithful, obedient, and willing to sacrifice. If they submit to God's discipline, carrying out His directions and choosing His servants as their counselors, they will develop into righteous, high-principled, steadfast men, whom God can entrust with responsibilities. {PK 223.1}

As the gospel is proclaimed in its purity, men will be called from the plow and from the common commercial business vocations that largely occupy the mind and will be educated in connection with men of experience. As they learn to labor effectively, they will proclaim the truth with power. Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come. {PK 223.2}

Too often, sermonizing is the main focus, at the expense of praying, and seeking God to bring the unity instead of trying to manufacture the unity with our arguments. Many will awake like the ten virgins that are not a bride either to join the procession or come to find the door closed.

*Every specification of this parable should be carefully studied. We are represented either by the wise or by the foolish virgins. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. They have not a knowledge of his ways; they are not prepared for his coming. They have made a pretense of waiting for their Lord. They have not watched and prayed with that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. They have lived a life of carelessness. They have heard and assented to the truth, but they have never brought it into their practical life. The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. The oil is the holy grace that is sent from heaven; and there must be an inward adorning with that grace, if we would stand when he appears. {RH, October 31, 1899 par. 13}*

*Lingering near the bride's house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. **THEY SEE THE PROCESSION MOVING ON**, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The ten maidens seize their lamps and begin to trim them, in haste to go forth. But five have neglected to fill their flasks with oil. They did not anticipate so long a delay, and they have not prepared for the emergency. In distress they appeal to their wiser companions saying, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." (Margin.) But the waiting five, with their freshly trimmed lamps, have emptied their flagons. They have no oil to spare, and they answer, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." {COL 405.2}*

*The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state. The True Witness declares, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in the throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." {RH, August 19, 1890 par. 10}*

They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride [ten virgins whether wise or foolish are not part of the bride till they join the procession – so the bride is the procession, who is this procession then?].

*I saw those who cherished the light looking upward with ardent desire, expecting Jesus to come and take them to Himself. Soon a cloud passed over them, and their faces were sorrowful. I inquired the cause of this cloud and was shown that it was their disappointment. The time when they expected their Saviour had passed, and Jesus had not come. As discouragement settled upon the waiting ones, the ministers and leading men whom I had before noticed, rejoiced, and all those who had rejected the light triumphed greatly, while Satan and his evil angels also exulted. {EW 241.1}*

*Then I heard the voice of another angel saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" A light shone upon those desponding ones, and with ardent desires for His appearing, they again fixed their eyes upon Jesus. I saw a number of angels conversing with the one who had cried, "Babylon is fallen," and these united with him in the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." The musical voices of these angels seemed to reach everywhere. An exceedingly bright and glorious light shone around those who had cherished the light which had been imparted to them. Their faces shone with excellent glory, and they united with the angels in the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." As they harmoniously raised the cry among the different companies, those who rejected the light pushed them and with angry looks scorned and derided them. But angels of God wafted their wings over the persecuted ones, while Satan and his angels were seeking to press their darkness around them, to lead them to reject the light from heaven. {EW 241.2}*

*Then I heard a voice saying to those who had been **PUSHED AND DERIDED**, "Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean." In obedience to this voice, a large number broke the cords which bound them, and leaving the companies that were in darkness, joined those who had previously gained their freedom, and joyfully united their voices with them. I heard the voice of earnest, agonizing prayer from a few who still remained with the companies that were in darkness. The ministers and leading men were passing around in these different companies, fastening the cords more firmly; but still I heard this voice of earnest prayer. Then I saw those who had been praying reach out their hands for help toward the united company who were free, rejoicing in God. The answer from them, as they earnestly looked to heaven, and pointed upward, was, "Come out from among them, and be separate." I saw individuals struggling for freedom, and at last they broke the cords that bound them. They resisted the efforts which were made to fasten the cords tighter and refused to heed the repeated assertions: "God is with us." "We have the truth with us." {EW 242.1}*

**PERSONS WERE CONTINUALLY LEAVING** the companies that were in darkness and joining the free company, who appeared to be in an open field raised above the earth. Their gaze was directed upward, the glory of God rested upon them, and they joyfully shouted His praise. They were

*closely united and seemed to be wrapped in the light of heaven. Around this company were some who came under the influence of the light, but who were not particularly united to the company. All who cherished the light shed upon them were gazing upward with intense interest, and Jesus looked upon them with sweet approbation. They expected Him to come and longed for His appearing. **THEY DID NOT CAST ONE LINGERING LOOK TO EARTH.** But again a cloud settled upon the waiting ones, and I saw them turn their weary eyes downward. I inquired the cause of this change. Said my accompanying angel, "They are again disappointed in their expectations. Jesus cannot yet come to earth. They must endure greater trials for His sake. They must give up errors and traditions received from men and turn wholly to God and His Word. They must be purified, made white, and tried. Those who endure that bitter trial will obtain an eternal victory." {EW 243.1}*

In the General Conference of 1901 Ellen G. White, just back in the United States after a nine-year sojourn in Australia, was invited to attend the General Conference session of 1901, held in Battle Creek. It was the first session she had attended in a ten-year period. The president of the General Conference, G. A. Irwin, made his opening address. Then Ellen White pressed to the front of the assembly, desirous of speaking. Earnestly she addressed the conference, pointing out the manner in which the work of God had been circumscribed as a few men in Battle Creek carried the responsibility of a work far beyond their grasp. She testified that these men and the cause were injured as they encouraged others to look to them for guidance in every phase of the work. She pointed out that there were some men in responsible places who had lost the spirit of consecration so essential to their work. At that meeting she cried out,

*"What we want now is a re-organization. we want to begin at the foundation and build on a different principle."--General Conference Bulletin, April 3, 1901.*

Friends I repeat the same words, "what we want now is a re-organization urgently. we want to begin at the foundation and build on a different principle building on the foundation of Jesus Christ Apostles and Prophets.

*1Corinthians 3:11: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*Ephesians 2:19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

People are concentrated should go in the field and if proven successful then let them be enlisted in the service receiving double honour for their work.

*"In no way can a preacher so well prove himself as in entering new fields. There he can see the fruits of his own labors. And if he be SUCCESSFUL IN*

*raising up churches, and establishing them, so that they bear good fruits, he gives to his brethren the best proofs that he is sent of the Lord.” –James White, Review and Herald, April 15, 1862. Vol. XIX, No. 20, 156.”*

In 1862 James White, penned

*“Some who join the Seventh-day Adventists commence at once to preach to the brethren, many of whom are far in advance of them. And our brethren often err in urging such to spend their time in preaching to them. Let such ministers first be suitably instructed by those of experience in the message, then let them go out into new fields, trusting in God for help and success. And when they shall have raised up churches, and shall have properly instructed them, then those churches will support them. If they cannot raise up churches and friends to sustain them, then certainly the cause of truth has no need of them and they have the best reasons for concluding that they made a sad mistake when they thought that God called them to teach the third angel’s message” –James White, Review and Herald, April 15, 1862, Vol. XIX, No. 20, 156.*

*“We have not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent. In some of the very large churches we have elected pastors, but as a rule we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work and our brethren and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry forward their church work without settled pastors. And I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken and to lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized and our work will be on a retreat.” –A. G. Daniells, Ministerial Institute Address, Los Angeles, California March 1912. [A.G. Daniels, “the longest serving president of the General Conference” (1901-1922), and one of the most dynamics leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church].*

Ellen White:

*“There should not be a call to have settled pastors over our churches, but let the life-giving power of the truth impress the individual to act, leading them to labor interestedly to carry on efficient work in each locality.” –Atlantic Union Gleaner January 8, 1902*

*“The world is to be warned. Ministers should work earnestly and devotedly, opening new fields and engaging in personal labor for souls, instead of hovering over the churches that already have great light and many advantages. The people of God who have had light and knowledge have not carried out the high and holy purposes of God. They have not advanced from victory to victory, adding new territory, lifting up the standard in the cities and their suburbs. Great spiritual blindness has been shown by those who have had great light flashed upon them by the Lord, but who have not advanced in the light to greater and still greater light. –7T 255.3*

HMS Richards, Sr.:

*"When I was baptized and later became a young preacher, we looked upon churches that had to have settled pastors over every flock as being decadent. Most of our preachers were out on the firing line, holding meetings, winning men to Christ, and raising up new churches." –Feed My Sheep, p. 156*

False doctrines are not the only cause of darkness upon a congregation:

*Ministers may preach pleasing and forcible discourses, and much labor may be put forth to build up and make the church prosperous; BUT UNLESS its individual members shall act their part as servants of Jesus Christ, the church will ever be in darkness and without strength. Hard and dark as the world is, the influence of a really consistent example will be a power for good.—Testimonies for the Church 4:285, 286*

### **Simple Organization and Gospel Order - A Governing Body?!**

*Before pressing forward into new territory, Paul and his companions visited the churches that had been established in Pisidia and the regions round about. "As they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches ESTABLISHED in the faith, and increased in number daily." AA 205.4*

*Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. [TM 489]*

*I was shown that some have feared that our churches would become Babylon if they should organize; but those in central New York have been perfect Babylon, confusion. And now unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments. [1T 270]*

These quotations do not say anything about binding up all the lines of work under one control (centralization); nor do they say anything about choosing a president, or administrator, to act as the visible head of the church. Let us, therefore, look at some more statements on organization in order to have a clearer understanding of the subject.

*[FE 253] Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment.*

*What is the purpose of church organization?*

*[6T 29] The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth.*

*[6T 116] We fully believe in church organization; but this is not to prescribe the exact way in which we should work, for not all minds are to be reached by the same methods.*

*[EW 97] The Lord has shown that gospel order has been too much feared and neglected. Formality should be shunned; but, in so doing, order should not be neglected. There is order in heaven. There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth, and after His departure order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and to destroy it. Therefore men are hurried into the field who lack wisdom and judgment, perhaps not ruling well their own house, and not having order or government over the few that God has given them charge of at home; yet they feel capable of having charge of the flock. They make many wrong moves, and those unacquainted with our faith judge all the messengers to be like these self-sent men. Thus the cause of God is reproached, and the truth shunned by many unbelievers who would otherwise be candid and anxiously inquire, Are these things so?*

Men whose lives are not holy and who are unqualified to teach the present truth enter the field without being acknowledged by the church or the brethren generally, and confusion and disunion are the result.

*[EW 100] I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said, "The church must flee to God's Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected." This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.*

What kind of organization is being referred to by these statements?

*[SDA Encyclopedia 1043] A strong plea for gospel order (that is, church organization based on New Testament models) was made by Ellen G. White in the fall of 1853 (published in 1854; see EW 97-101) after she and her husband, James White, attended conferences in New York state and New England where they encountered strife and disunion.*

*[Loma Linda Messages, p. 816 (p. 464 in CD edition)] Simple organization and church order are set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and the Lord has ordained these for the unity and perfection of the church.*

*[AA 91] The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel.*

*[AA 185-186] As an important factor in the spiritual growth of the new converts the apostles were careful to surround them with the safeguards of gospel order. Churches were duly organized in all places in Lycaonia and Pisidia where there were believers. Officers were appointed in each church,*

*and proper order and system were established for the conduct of all the affairs pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the believers.*

This was in harmony with the gospel plan of uniting in one body all believers in Christ, and this plan Paul was careful to follow throughout his ministry. Those who in any place were by his labor led to accept Christ as the Saviour were at the proper time organized into a church. Even when the believers were but few in number, this was done. The Christians were thus taught to help one another, remembering the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20.

What kind of officers was appointed in the proper order and system that the apostles established in the church?

*Acts 14:23 "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed."*

*[AA 261] The church had been properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons.*

As the membership of the church grew did they appoint one man to be the president, administrator, or the visible head of the church? NO! What then is the solution to the continual growth of the church?

*[AA 88-89] The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church. There was necessity for a further distribution of the responsibilities which had been borne so faithfully by a few during the earlier days of the church. The apostles must now take an important step in the perfecting of gospel order in the church by laying upon others some of the burdens thus far borne by themselves.*

Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel. "Wherefore, brethren," they said, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons.

The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.

*Acts 2:41-42 "Then they that gladly received this word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship..."*

Did Christ delegate any special authority to one of His disciples above the others?

*[DA 414] If Jesus had delegated any special authority to one of the disciples above the others, we should not find them so often contending as to who should be the greatest. They would have submitted to the wish of their Master, and honored the one whom He had chosen. Instead of appointing one to be their head, Christ said to the disciples, "Be not ye called Rabbi;" "neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Matt. 23:8, 10.*

"The head of every man is Christ." God, who put all things under the Saviour's feet, "gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22, 23. The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man. Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction. The Saviour declares, "All ye are brethren." Creeds wont either bring unity but only cohesion for unity is not found creeds:

*One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture may be especially appreciated by him; another sees another portion as very important, and thus one may present one point, and another, another point, and both may be of highest value. This is all in the order of God. But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. Then let every soul sit down in Christ's school and learn of Christ, who declares Himself to be meek and lowly of heart. Christ says that if we learn of Him, worries will cease and we shall find rest to our souls. {11MR 266.1}*

It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world and when he speaks he speaks ex cathedra. God has never given a hint in his word that he has appointed any man to be the head of the church.

What does a title of honor indicate?

*[Ev 132-133] He (Christ) reproved the vanity shown in coveting the title of rabbi, or master. Such a title, He declared, belonged not to men, but to*

*Christ. Priests, scribes, and rulers, expounders and administrators of the law, were all brethren, children of one Father. Jesus impressed upon the people that they were to give no man a title of honor indicating his control of their conscience or their faith.*

*Job 32:21-32. "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; [in so doing] my maker would soon take me away."*

How does the church move as one body especially in meeting problems which could affect the entire body of believers scattered over a large territory?

*[AA 95-96] The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. When dissension arose in a local church, as later it did arise in Antioch and elsewhere, and the believers were unable to come to an agreement among themselves, such matters were not permitted to create a division in the church, but were referred to a general council of the entire body of believers, made up of appointed delegates from the various local churches, with the apostles and elders in positions of leading responsibility. Thus the efforts of Satan to attack the church in isolated places were met by concerted action on the part of all, and the plans of the enemy to disrupt and destroy were thwarted.*

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." I Corinthians 14:33. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.

*[9T 109] All are to look to Jesus for direction, not depending on man for wisdom, lest they be led astray. As laborers together with God they should seek to be in harmony with one another. There should be frequent councils and earnest, wholehearted co-operation. Yet all are to look to Jesus for wisdom, not depending upon men alone for direction.*

*[Ev 97] As workers we need to counsel together over difficult matters. It is right that brother should consult with brother. And it is our privilege after we have done this, to bow together in prayer and ask for divine wisdom and counsel. But for one human voice to be a controlling power is a sad mistake.*

Some people believe that the New Testament order and system is obsolete and does not apply now. They say it was only applicable at the beginning of the work, and that God does not require us to return to that system today. Is it true?

*[3SP 293] It is necessary that the same order and system should be maintained in the church now as in the days of the apostles.*

*[7T 54] The Lord has signified that His work should be carried forward in the same spirit in which it was begun.*

*[Kress Collection, p. 120] Our churches and institutions must return to where they were before the backsliding commenced, when they began trusting in man and making flesh their arm.*

What will result if we make any man-made additions to the model which Christ has specified for us to follow in the organization of His church?

*[7T 215] The laws of Christ's kingdom are so simple, and yet so complete, that man-made additions will create confusion. And the more simple our plans for work in God's service, the more we shall accomplish. To adopt worldly policy in the work of God is to invite disaster and defeat. Simplicity and humility must characterize every effective effort for the advancement of His kingdom.*

By adopting worldly policy, what was Christ denunciation through E.G. White to the SDA church in 1903?

*[8T 247-250] In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had... The heavenly Teacher inquired: "What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah?... I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: "Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? 'How is the faithful city become an harlot!' My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking."*

Because the SDA church has departed from the simplicity of the Gospel by adopting worldly policy, God pointed them back to return to the true Bible Order patterned after the Apostolic church which is ordained by God "for the unity and perfection of the church" in 1909.

*[9T 260-261] "At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work."*

*“When this power, which God has placed in the church, is accredited wholly to one man, and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is changed. Satan's efforts upon such a man's mind would be most subtle and sometimes well-nigh overpowering, for the enemy would hope that through his mind he could affect many others. Let us give to the highest organized authority in the church that which we are prone to give to one man or to a small group of men.”*

*[TM 477-478] “For years there has been a growing tendency for men placed in positions of responsibility to lord it over God's heritage, thus removing from church members their keen sense of the need of divine instruction and an appreciation of the privilege to counsel with God regarding their duty. This order of things must be changed. There must be a reform.”*

*LLM 816 (p. 464 in CD edition) “Simple organization and church order are set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and the Lord has ordained these for the unity and perfection of the church.”*

Is the current SDA church organization patterned to the New Testament Scriptures?

*“Neither should we insist that current Seventh-day Adventist Church organization and ceremony are modeled directly after the pattern of the New Testament.” Ministry Magazine, May 2002, p 27*

The SDA church organization is patterned after the Roman Catholic Church.

*“...the polity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is hierarchal; authority flows downward and members in local congregations have virtually no voice. Above the level, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a closed, self-operating, and self-perpetuating system, similar to the Roman Catholic Church...” Spectrum, Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums, vol 14, no 4, March 19, 1984.*

Sis. White was shown that the General Conference would become Catholic (see 1T 578). That it is following the track of Romanism (see TM 362). This prophecy is now unfolding. Former President of the General Conference, Neal C. Wilson said:

*“There is another universal and truly Catholic Organization, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Adventist Review, March 5, 1981*

*“Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history.” Great Controversy, p 565.*

## **Principles of Separation if Counsel not Heeded**

**A strange thing has come into our churches. Men who are placed in positions of responsibility that they may be wise helpers to their fellow workers have come to suppose that they were set as kings and rulers in the churches, to say to one brother, Do this; to another, Do that; and to another, Be sure to labor in such and such a way. THERE HAVE BEEN PLACES WHERE THE WORKERS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IF THEY DID NOT FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTION OF THESE MEN OF RESPONSIBILITY, THEIR PAY FROM THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE WITHHELD.** {TM 477.2}

**The conferences were not established to exercise dominion over the ministry, nor over the local churches, but rather to plan and expand the work of God in various regions and areas. Furthermore, the conferences were to act as counselors, not as dictators to the people of God** (Colin and Russell Standish, *Organizational Structure and Apostasy*, p. 13).

**The change has deviated and built a Czardom enthroned which has since gone steadily onward in the same way and has with perfect consistency built up a thorough bureaucratic government, by which it reaches and meddles with, and manipulates, the affairs of all, not only of union and local conferences, but of local churches, and of individual persons** [Ibid., p. 10.]

There is a lot of cry to stay in GC organization for the ship is going through, that we have a sit until God purifies it and it goes through. Is this what is revealed through the inspiration:

*There was a coming out, a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life. So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so it will be in the last days. Again the voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity.* {PP 166.4}

*The Lord Jesus will always have a chosen people to serve Him. When the Jewish people rejected Christ, the Prince of life, He took from them the kingdom of God and gave it unto the Gentiles. God will continue to work on this principle with every branch of His work. When a church proves unfaithful to the word of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities. But, if these in turn do not purify their lives from every wrong action, if they do not establish pure and holy principles in all their borders, then the Lord will grievously afflict and humble them and, unless they repent, will remove them from their place and make them a reproach. . . .* {UL 131.3}

*My sons, I would have you firmly united as brothers in the flesh and as brothers in Christian fellowship.* {17MR 64.1} *I have a work to do, and I am now making decisions. I must remain away from conference meetings. I must not attend camp meetings. The spirit of drawing apart, as the result of judging one another, has become so common, and the churches are becoming so leavened with this spirit, that I have no desire to attend these*

meetings. After returning from them, it is often weeks before I am able to take up my neglected work. {17MR 64.2} Because those in positions of responsibility have for years left the Southern field unworked, notwithstanding the most decided testimonies urging them to take up this work; because they continue to neglect this field and use every manner of device in trying to uproot the confidence of the people in those who have done the hardest and most self-sacrificing work in the South, I have but very little confidence that the Lord is giving these men in positions of responsibility spiritual eyesight and heavenly discernment. I am thrown into perplexity over their course; and I desire now to attend to my special work, to have no part in any of their councils, and to attend no camp-meetings, nigh nor afar off. My mind shall not be dragged into confusion by the tendency they manifest to work directly contrary to the light that God has given me. I am done. I will preserve my God-given intelligence. {17MR 64.3} My voice has been heard in the different conferences and at camp meetings. I must now make a change. I cannot enter the atmosphere of strife and then have to bear testimonies that cost me much more than those to whom they are sent can imagine. When I attend the different meetings, I am compelled to deal with men, standing in responsible places, who I know are not exerting an influence that God can endorse. And when I bear a testimony in reference to their course of action, advantage is taken of this testimony. These men have not clear understanding. Should I say the things that I know, they would not, with their present experience, use this instruction wisely, and would bring upon me inconceivable burdens. {17MR 64.4} I shall, therefore, leave them to receive word from the Bible, in which the principles upon which they should work are laid down in straight lines. {17MR 65.1} There are those who look upon themselves as the Lord's servants, but who, as shown by the way in which the Southern work has been handled, are working away from the light that God has for years been giving. I have pity for them, but I cannot be forever pointing out for them the way of righteousness. They are brought no nearer right actions by what I say than if the words were never spoken. So long as those in responsible positions see things through a false medium, they will put a wrong construction on my work. {17MR 65.2} The light I have for our ministers is: Seek God; stop your whisperings and your evil surmisings instigated by Satan, and see if the love of God will not fill heart and soul. And I will go on with my writing. This is the light given me, and I shall not depart from it. {17MR 65.3}

There is to be no change in the general features of our work. It is to stand as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it. We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more. If any stand in the way, to hinder the advancement of the work in the lines that God has appointed, they will displease God. No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world. {6T 17.2}

I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it

*is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness. {EW 124.3}*

*I saw that we have no time to throw away in listening to fables. Our minds should not be thus diverted, but should be occupied with the present truth, and seeking wisdom that we may obtain a more thorough knowledge of our position, that with meekness we may be able to give a reason of our hope from the Scriptures. While false doctrines and dangerous errors are pressed upon the mind, it cannot be dwelling upon the truth which is to fit and prepare the house of Israel to stand in the day of the Lord. {EW 125.1}*

*The Spirit of God had wrought with and through Paul in his labors for his countrymen. Sufficient evidence had been presented to convince all who honestly desired to know the truth. But many permitted themselves to be controlled by prejudice and unbelief, and refused to yield to the most conclusive evidence. Fearing that the faith of the believers would be endangered by continued association with these opposers of the truth, Paul separated from them and gathered the disciples into a distinct body, continuing his public instructions in the school of Tyrannus, a teacher of some note. {AA 285.3}*

### *Medical Missionary Work*

*Again and again the Lord has pointed out the work which the church in Battle Creek and those all through America are to do. They are to reach a much higher standard in spiritual advancement than they have yet reached. They are to awake out of sleep and go without the camp, working for souls that are ready to perish. {8T 70.4} The medical missionary workers are doing the long-neglected work which God gave to the church in Battle Creek --they are giving the last call to the supper which He has prepared. {8T 71.1} My brethren, why do you keep so many things bound up in Battle Creek? Why do you not take the tract and missionary work into other cities, where there is much missionary work to be done? {8T 71.2} The many interests centering in Battle Creek should be divided and subdivided, and placed in other cities. You who think you are wise men may say: "It will cost too much. We can do the work here in Battle Creek at less expense." Well, does not the Lord know all this? Is not He a God who understands all the unbelieving reasoning that holds so many interests in Battle Creek? He has revealed to you that centers should be made in all the cities. This would call many out of Battle Creek to work in other places. {8T 71.3} In order to be carried forward aright, the medical missionary work needs talent. It requires strong, willing hands, and wise, discriminating management. But can this be while those in responsible places--presidents*

of conferences and ministers --bar the way? {8T 71.4}. The Lord says to the presidents of conferences and to other influential brethren: "Remove the stumbling blocks that have been placed before the people." {8T 71.5} Our people in Battle Creek have not exercised their talents in planning and devising how to plant the standard of truth in regions where the message has not been proclaimed and where decided efforts should be made; and the Lord has moved upon Dr. Kellogg and his associates to do the work which belongs to the church and which was offered to them, but which they did not choose to accept. Some in Battle Creek, instead of taking up the work given them of God, have, by following their own selfish way, blinded their spiritual eyesight and the spiritual eyesight of others; and God has placed His precious work in the hands of those who will take it up and carry it forward. {8T 71.6} God is in His holy place, and He dwells also with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Those who are doing medical missionary work should have the full sanction and co-operation of the church. If they do not have this they are hindered. Nevertheless, they will advance. It is not in God's plan that there shall be two churches in Battle Creek because of the want of co-operation. How much better it is to seek for unity of action. If the medical missionary workers will carry this line of effort into the churches everywhere, if they will work in the fear of God, they will find many doors opened before them, and angels will work with them. {8T 72.1} Please read the invitation to the supper, and the last call to be made. Study what is being done to meet the command of Jesus. I cannot understand why such indifference is manifested, why you should stand afar off and criticize and draw away. The gospel net is to be cast into the sea, and it draws both good and bad. But because this is so, shall men and women ignore the efforts made to save those who will believe and who will unite in reaching that class of whom Christ spoke in His rebuke to the Pharisees? Sinners and harlots, He said, "go into the kingdom of God before you." Will you not see that even in the church there are those who have no connection with God? But Christ says: Let the tares and the wheat grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn." {8T 72.2} **When the Lord moves upon the churches, bidding them do a certain work, and they refuse to do that work; and when some, their human efforts united with the divine, endeavor to reach to the very depths of human woe and misery, God's blessing will rest richly upon them. Even though but few accept the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, their work will not be in vain; for one soul is precious, very precious, in the sight of God. Christ would have died for one soul in order that that one might live through the eternal ages.** {8T 72.3}

We should feel deeply over these things, for they are true. We should have a high estimate of truth and of the value of souls. Time is short, and there is a great work to be done. If you feel no interest in the work that is going forward, if you will not encourage medical missionary work in the churches, it will be done without your consent; for it is the work of God, and it must be done. My brethren and sisters, take your position on the Lord's side and be earnest, active, courageous co-workers with Christ, laboring with Him to seek and save the lost. {8T 75.2}

*That which I have seen of eternal things, and that which I have seen of the weakness of humanity, has deeply impressed my mind and influenced my lifework. I see nothing wherein man should be praised or glorified. I see no reason why the opinions of worldly-wise men and so-called great men should be trusted in and exalted. How can those who are destitute of divine enlightenment have correct ideas of God's plans and ways? They either deny Him altogether and ignore His existence, or they circumscribe His power by their own finite conceptions. {MH 449.2}*

*The recreant priests added licentiousness to the dark catalogue of their crimes; yet they still polluted by their presence the tabernacle of the Lord, and, laden with sin, dared to come into the presence of a holy God. As the men of Israel witnessed the corrupt course of the priests, they thought it safer for their families not to come up to the appointed place of worship. Many went from Shiloh with their peace disturbed, their indignation aroused, until they at last determined to offer their sacrifices themselves, concluding that this would be fully as acceptable to God, as to sanction in any manner the abominations practiced in the sanctuary. {ST, December 1, 1881 par. 13}*

*Jesus sends his people a message of warning to prepare them for his coming. To the prophet John was made known the closing work in the great plan of man's redemption. He beheld an angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." [Revelation 14:6, 7.] {4SP 199.2}. The angel represented in prophecy as delivering this message, symbolizes a class of faithful men, who, obedient to the promptings of God's Spirit and the teachings of his word, proclaim this warning to the inhabitants of earth. This message was not to be committed to the religious leaders of the people. They had failed to preserve their connection with God, and had refused the light from Heaven; therefore they were not of the number described by the apostle Paul: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness." [1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5.] {4SP 199.3}*

*As members of the Church of England, they were strongly attached to her forms of worship, but the Lord had presented before them in his Word a higher standard. The Holy Spirit urged them to preach Christ and him crucified. The power of the Highest attended their labors. Thousands were convicted and truly converted. It was necessary that these sheep be protected from ravening wolves. Wesley had no thought of forming a new denomination, but he organized them under what was called the Methodist Connection. {GC88 257.1}*

*Let me tell you, if your heart is in the work, and you have faith in God, you need not depend upon the sanction of any minister or any people; if you go right to work in the name of the Lord, in a humble way doing what you can*

to teach the truth, God will vindicate you. If the work had not been so restricted by an impediment here, and an impediment there, and on the other side an impediment, it would have gone forward in its majesty. It would have gone in weakness at first, but the God of heaven lives; the great Overseer lives, the One who knew where Cornelius lived, and who appeared to him as an angel, and declared to him, Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God. And now do you send men for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, who lives with one Simon a tanner. And he told him the very place where Simon the tanner lived. Then the angel of the Lord went to Peter, and prepared his mind for the reception of the men. {1888 1746.2}

Shall the "regular lines", which say that every mind shall be controlled by two or three minds at Battle Creek, continue to bear sway? The Macedonian cry is coming from every quarter. Shall men go to the "regular lines" to see whether they will be permitted to labor, or shall they go out and work as best they can, depending on their own abilities and on the help of the Lord, beginning in a humble way and creating an interest in the truth in places in which nothing has been done to give the warning message? {SpM 176.5}

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience. {DA 232.2}

I was confirmed in all I had stated in Minneapolis, that a reformation must go through the churches. Reforms must be made, for spiritual weakness and blindness were upon the people who had been blessed with great light and precious opportunities and privileges. As reformers they had come out of the denominational churches, but they now act a part similar to that which the churches acted. We hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out. While we will endeavor to keep the "unity of the Spirit" in the bonds of peace, we will not with pen or voice cease to protest against bigotry. {1888 356.4}

There is enough wealth in your conference to carry forward this work successfully; and shall the prince of darkness be left in undisputed possession of our great cities because it costs something to sustain missions? **Let those who would follow Christ fully come up to the work, even if it be over the heads of ministers and president.** Those who in such a work as this will say, "I pray thee have me excused," should

*beware lest they receive their discharge for time and for eternity. Let Christians who love duty lift every ounce they can and then look to God for further strength. He will work through the efforts of thoroughgoing men and women and will do what they cannot do. New light and power will be given them as they use what they have. New fervor and zeal will stir the church as they see something accomplished. {5T 369.2}*

*The people whom God had called to be the pillar and ground of the truth had become representatives of Satan. They were doing the work that he desired them to do, taking a course to misrepresent the character of God, and cause the world to look upon Him as a tyrant. The very priests who ministered in the temple had lost sight of the significance of the service they performed. They had ceased to look beyond the symbol to the thing signified. In presenting the sacrificial offerings they were as actors in a play. The ordinances which God Himself had appointed were made the means of blinding the mind and hardening the heart. God could do no more for man through these channels. The whole system must be swept away. {DA 36.2}*

Brethren, The old standard bearers knew what it was to wrestle with God in prayer, and to enjoy the outpouring of His Spirit. But these are passing off from the stage of action; and who are coming up to fill their places? How is it with the rising generation? Are they converted to God? Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come. {1SM 122.1}. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals. This cry the temple of the Lord, the temple of the while men work in opposite direction to God's while men depend on them is a willful rebellion and a leaning on the arm of flesh and dependence on human machinery which fallible.

I have to a conclusion based from inspiration that the people have been lulled to think that the General Conference or any Independent Ministry is the Church. This has been the hypnosis going on and people have to be cut lose from such mentality and break the yokes that are not of Christ. The Seventh Day Adventist Church is a movement and it shall remain so. Those who faithfully obey the Lord are the church not any organization on earth and so the General Conference and Independent Ministries are a part and organizations of a larger Seventh Adventist Movement. Organization is needed now, but in proper lines and then we shall have many ministries independent working together in the right gospel order under one Advent Movement. Heaven has order and so do we need one.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinions of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren? {3T 446.3}

### *Necessity of Harmonious Action*

While it is true that the Lord guides individuals, it is also true that He is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. {TM 488.2} Those who were in our work at the beginning are passing away. Only a few of the pioneers of the cause now remain among us. Many of the heavy burdens formerly borne by men of long experience are now falling upon younger men. {TM 488.3} This transfer of responsibilities to laborers whose experience is more or less limited is attended with some dangers against which we need to guard. The world is filled with strife for the supremacy. The spirit of pulling away from our fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe. By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous--as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. They declare that they will not take any man's say-so; that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course, independent of the counsel of their brethren. {TM 488.4} Herein lies a grave danger to the prosperity of our work. We must move discreetly, sensibly, in harmony with the judgment of God-fearing counselors; for in this course alone lies our safety and strength. Otherwise God cannot work with us and by us and for us. {TM 489.1} Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time. {TM 489.2}

Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the

facts, which He has given for our instruction. Here was Paul, one whom Christ was to fit for a most important work, one who was to be a chosen vessel unto Him, brought directly into the presence of Christ; yet He does not teach him the lessons of truth. He arrests his course and convicts him; and when he asks, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" the Saviour does not tell him directly, but places him in connection with His church. They will tell thee what thou must do. Jesus is the sinner's friend, His heart is ever open, ever touched with human woe; He has all power, both in heaven and upon earth; but He respects the means which He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men. He directs Saul to the church, thus acknowledging the power that He has invested in it as a channel of light to the world. It is Christ's organized body upon the earth, and respect is required to be paid to His ordinances. In the case of Saul, Ananias represents Christ, and he also represents Christ's ministers upon the earth who are appointed to act in Christ's stead. {3T 433.1} Saul was a learned teacher in Israel; but while he is under the influence of blind error and prejudice, Christ reveals Himself to him, and then places him in communication with His church, who are the light of the world. They are to instruct this educated, popular orator, in the Christian religion. In Christ's stead Ananias touches his eyes that they may receive sight; in Christ's stead he lays his hands upon him, prays in Christ's name, and Saul receives the Holy Ghost. All is done in the name and authority of Christ. Christ is the fountain. The church is the channel of communication. Those who boast of personal independence need to be brought into closer relation to Christ by connection with His church upon the earth. {3T 433.2}

There are thousands who are traveling the road of darkness and error, the broad road which leads to death, who flatter themselves that they are in the path to happiness and heaven; but they will never find the one nor reach the other. Brother B needs the helps that God has placed in the church, for he cannot constitute a church of himself, and yet his course shows that he would be satisfied to be a complete church, subject to none. Brother B long since lost his consecration to God; he did not guard the avenue of his soul against the suggestions of Satan. I saw that angels of God were writing his words and actions. He was going further and further from the light of heaven. When the grace of God does not especially control you, Brother B, you are a hard man to connect with. You have great self-confidence and firmness, which are felt in your family and in the church. You have but little reverence and respect for anyone. You do not possess the grace of humility. {3T 438.1}

It is a mistake to withdraw from those who do not agree with our ideas. This will not inspire our brethren with confidence in our judgment. It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies. Unless we humble our hearts before God, we shall not know His will. {TM 500.3}

This transfer of responsibilities to laborers whose experience is more or less limited is attended with some dangers against which we need to guard. The world is filled with strife for the supremacy. The spirit of pulling away from fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we

*breathe. By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous-- as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man's say-so, that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course independent of the counsel of their brethren. {9T 257.2} Herein lies a grave danger to the prosperity of our work. We must move discreetly, sensibly, in harmony with the judgment of God-fearing counselors; for in this course alone lies our safety and strength. Otherwise God cannot work with us and by us and for us. {9T 257.3} Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time. {9T 257.4}*

*Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together. {9T 258.1} The spasmodic, fitful movements of some who claim to be Christians are well represented by the work of strong but untrained horses. When one pulls forward, another pulls back, and at the voice of their master one plunges ahead and the other stands immovable. If men will not move in concert in the great and grand work for this time, there will be confusion. It is not a good sign when men refuse to unite with their brethren and prefer to act alone. Let laborers take into their confidence the brethren who are free to point out every departure from right principles. If men wear the yoke of Christ, they can not pull apart; they will draw with Christ. {9T 258.2} Some workers pull with all the power that God has given them, but they have not yet learned that they should not pull alone. Instead of isolating themselves, let them draw in harmony with their fellow laborers. Unless they do this, their activity will work at the wrong time and in the wrong way. They will often work counter to that which God would have done, and thus their work is worse than wasted. {9T 258.3}*

## Creeds

The central role of the Church Manual in Seventh-day Adventist Churches today makes it hard to believe that for almost 90 years, Seventh-day Adventists had no church manual. There was strong opposition in the early days to a church manual, so none was framed. The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were adamant that their only basis of faith was the Bible. In clarion tones they declared, "We have no creed but the Bible." "The Bible and the Bible only is our basis of faith and practice." These watch-cries were the basis of the acceptance of all of the great truths of God. The servant of the Lord strongly endorsed this stand.

*The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Selected Messages, Book I, p. 416*

It was on the basis of these declarations that the early Adventists proclaimed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been raised up in the last days in response to prophetic fulfillment. They used texts such as,

*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12*

*The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17*

*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:14*

In the organization of the General Conference in 1863, no thought was given to the establishment of a creed. Such was considered not only unnecessary, but dangerous to a church. Noting that, like the Roman Catholics, many Protestant churches had chosen to formulate creeds, the Seventh-day Adventists strongly believed that this had brought impotency and formalism to these churches.

What three of our pioneers had to say about creeds:

James White:

*"Some suppose that if we should organize to hold our meeting-houses, we have got to get up a creed. I think that Bro. Loughborough is right. There is no necessity of the formation of articles of faith. But if a society is to be formed to hold meeting-houses, etc., why of course there would have to be some articles of association; but these would be nothing like articles of our religious faith as a body" (Review and Herald, 10/16/1860).*

Uriah Smith:

*"We are not unmindful of the noble service the Protestant Churches have rendered to the world, to humanity, and to religion, by introducing and defending, so far as they have, the great principles of Protestantism. But they have made a fatal mistake in stereotyping their doctrines into creeds, and thus taking the first step backward toward the spiritual tyranny of Rome. Thus the good promise they gave of a free religion and an unfettered conscience is already broken; for if the right of private judgement is allowed*

*by the Protestant Church, why are men condemned and expelled from the Church for no other crime than honestly attempting to obey the word of God, in some particulars not in accordance with her creed? This is the beginning of apostasy" (The Marvel of Nations, p. 163, 1887).*

John Loughborough:

*"The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such. I plead that we are not patterning after the churches in any unwarrantable sense, in the step proposed" (Review and Herald, 10/8/1861).*

### **What is the proper use of Tithes and Offerings in the Gospel Order?**

Because of prevailing condition of things, many have seen it best to them to withhold what's due to God and use it as they will. Lets get deep to the foundation of these things.

#### **Dangers of withholding Tithe and Offerings**

I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God, and put into the treasury, and also of the final result of the means thus bestowed. The eye of God takes cognizance of every farthing devoted to His cause, and of the willingness or reluctance of the giver. The motive in giving is also chronicled. Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. ***Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view,—the glory of God and the salvation of souls,—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward.***— Testimonies for the Church 2:518, 519. ChS 221.2

***Tithes and offerings must not be withheld by givers even if they are not in harmony with what the Conference does.***--You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings because you are not in harmony with everything your brethren do? The tithes and offerings are not the property of any man, but are to be used in doing a certain work for God. Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised, but dare any one, because of this, withhold from the treasury, and brave the curse of God? I dare not. I pay my tithes gladly and freely, saying, as did David, "Of thine own have we given thee." A selfish withholding from God will tend to poverty in our own souls. Act your part, my brethren and sisters. God loves you, and He stands at the helm. If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God his own property. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently," or deceitfully.--2SAT 74, 75. {PaM 260.2}

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***You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings because you are not in harmony with everything that your brethren do? The tithes and offerings are not the property of any man, but are to be used in doing a certain work for God. Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised, but dare anyone, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God? I dare not. I pay my tithe gladly and freely, saying, as did David, "Of Thine own have we given Thee." A selfish withholding from God will tend to poverty in our own souls. Act your part, my brethren and sisters.*** God loves you, and He stands at the helm. If the conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring one. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it if you do what you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from the Lord His own property. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully" or negligently. {2SAT 74.4} When persons declare that they will not pay their tithes because the means is not used as they think it ought to be, will the elder of the church or the minister sympathize with the sinners? Will he aid the enemy in his work? Or will he, as a wise man endued with knowledge, go to work to correct the evil and remove the stumblingblocks? Let those who are dissatisfied state plainly their grievances to the ones who they think have erred instead of talking the matter over with others and thus fanning the flame of discontent. {2SAT 75.1}

***And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.*** But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit...That speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, when ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tithe part of the tithe. {Numbers 18:21-26}

***My brother, I wish to say to you, Be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about the tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and the most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be.*** It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way. In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers in that field....If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace. I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so... I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone. If this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do. I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe, who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated. I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example. --Letter 267, 1905, pp. 1, 2. (To Elder Watson, Jan. 22, 1905.) {Manuscript Releases Vol. 2, Page 99 - 100.3}

### ***Storehouse and Treasury - The Same***

If all the tithes were brought into the storehouse, God's treasury would not be empty Pacific Union Recorder October 10, 1901

“Bring ye all the TITHES into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house;” that is, a surplus of MEANS in the treasury, to amply sustain the work of God in its various branches. RH February 9, 1886, par. 18

### ***Revenue of the Gospel***

Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the gospel. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion,—the tithe. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this. RH February 2, 1911, Art. B, par. 14

### **Jesus is the True Storehouse**

(T)he Lord Jesus is a never-failing storehouse from which human beings may draw strength and courage. GW 265

There are only two places in the world where we can deposit our treasures—in God's storehouse or in Satan's, and all that is not devoted to Christ's service is counted on Satan's side and goes to strengthen his cause. 6T 447

Satan outgeneraled them. **He was more shrewd than they, and he managed to get their means into his ranks and thus deprive the cause of God of that which should have been used to sustain it in extending the truth and saving souls for whom Christ died.** They lost all they had invested, and robbed God of that which they should have rendered to Him. 2T 665

NOTE: **The Storehouse is seen as rendering into God's Treasury to support the cause of God for the extending of the truth and saving of souls...**

### **Vindicating use of tithes and offerings and honoring the name of the Lord**

**The elders of our churches and the ministers have not been as branches of the Living Vine, drawing nourishment from Christ. They are not rich in spiritual knowledge and heavenly wisdom, but are dry and Christless. Man's words they speak in the desk may be good in themselves, but they are powerless because the heart of the speaker has not been transformed by grace. The churches would be far better without such elders and ministers. {2SAT 73.1} Money is drawn from the Lord's treasury to support those who are unconverted and need that one teach them the first principle of the gospel,** which is Christ formed within, the hope of glory. When the laborers who are so lacking in spirituality believe in Christ, it will be manifest that they possess the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The words of Paul to the Corinthians should be heeded by all who labor for the Master: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Corinthians 16:13, 14). {2SAT 73.2} **For the last fifteen years the deplorable condition of the Michigan Conference has from time to time been presented before me. I have felt anguish of soul as I have seen the true state of things. There are dishonest men in our churches; there are licentious men. In this large conference there is declension in the place of constant advancement to a higher, holier standard. And there is little of the proper labor done by ministers in the churches,** because many do not carry the burden of the souls for whom they labor. The truth has not sanctified their own hearts. {2SAT 73.3}

Those who are truly converted are called to do a work that requires money and consecration. The obligation that binds us to place our names on the church roll holds us responsible to work for God to the utmost of our ability. He calls for undivided service, for the entire devotion of heart, soul, mind, and strength. Christ has brought us into church capacity that He may engage and engross all our capabilities in devoted service for the salvation of souls. Anything short of this is opposition to the work. **There are only two places in the world where we can deposit our treasures—in God's storehouse or in Satan's, and all**

**that is not devoted to Christ's service is counted on Satan's side and goes to strengthen his cause.** {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6, Page 447.2}

I have had special instruction from the Lord that the **tithe is for a special purpose, consecrated to God to sustain those who minister in the sacred work, as the Lord's chosen to do His work not only in sermonizing, but in ministering.** They should understand all that this comprehends. 1MR 187

**Light has been plainly given that those who minister in our schools, teaching the word of God, explaining the Scriptures, educating the students in the things of God, should be supported by the tithe money.** This instruction was given long ago, and more recently it has been repeated again and again. 6T 215

Some utterly fail to realize the importance of missionaries' being also medical missionaries. A gospel minister will be twice as successful in his work if he understands how to treat disease. Continually increasing light has been given me on this subject. **Some, who do not see the advantage of educating the youth to be physicians both of the mind and of the body, say that the tithe should not be used to support medical missionaries, who devote their time to treating the sick. In response to such statements as these, I am instructed to say that the mind must not become so narrowed down that it cannot take in the truth of the situation.** A minister of the gospel who is also a medical missionary, who can cure physical ailments, is a much more efficient worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete.... MM 245

**The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women.**—Manuscript 149, 1899. Ev 492

There are ministers' wives, Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson and Robinson, who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive their wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions shall be reversed. The Word says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." **When any such decision as this is made, I will in the name of the Lord, protest. I will feel it in my duty to create a fund from my tithe money, to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.** I know that the faithful women should be paid wages proportionate to the pay received by ministers. They carry the burden of souls, and should not be treated unjustly. These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith, and hire their own work done, and pay those who work for them. All these things must be adjusted and set in order, and justice be done to all. Proof-readers in the office receive their wages, two dollars and a half and three dollars a week. This I have had to pay, and others have to pay. But ministers' wives, who carry a tremendous responsibility, devoting their entire time, have nothing for their labor.--12MR 160, 161. {PaM 77.4} In not paying qualified spouses, we have sometimes done an injustice to them.--Injustice has sometimes been done to women who labor just as 78

devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being necessary to the work of the ministry. The method of paying men-laborers, and not paying their wives who share their labors with them, is a plan not according to the Lord's order, and if carried out in our conferences, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in. God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as disinterestedly to the work, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, even though they may not ask for this.--GW 452, 453. {PaM 77.5} Women's wages proportionate to time they give the work.--Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands. The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord's order. Injustice is thus done. A mistake made. The Lord does not favor this plan. This arrangement, if carried out in our conferences, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in. {PaM 78.1}

### ***True Responsibility in Stewardship***

“One reasons that the tithe may be applied to school purposes. Still others reason that canvassers and colporteurs should be supported from the tithe. But a great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers.” 9T 248

### ***Can we be true stewards and guiltless while we ignore the Lord's counsel in regard to tithe and it's use?***

***“It would be poor policy to support from the treasury of God those who really mar and injure His work, and who are constantly lowering the standard of Christianity.”*** Testimonies, vol. 3, 553.

“There are fearful woes for those who preach the truth, but are not sanctified by it, and also for those who ***consent to receive and maintain the unsanctified to minister to them in word and doctrine.***” Ibid., vol. 1, 261-262.

“As there are woes for those who preach the truth while they are unsanctified in heart and life, ***so there are woes for those who receive and maintain the unsanctified in the position which they cannot fill.***” Ibid., vol. 2, 552.

“God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. . . . ***Every man has been made a steward of sacred trusts; each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God. . . . We are responsible to invest this means ourselves.***” Testimonies, vol. 7, 176-177.

“Do we individually realize our true position, that as God’s hired servants we are not to bargain away our stewardship? ***We have an individual accountability before the heavenly universe, to administer the trust committed us of God.***” Testimonies to Ministers, 361-362

**"It would be poor policy to support from the treasury of God those who really mar and injure His work, and who are constantly lowering the standard of Christianity.** {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, Page. 553.2}

**"Those teachers in the church or in the school who distinguish themselves by their zeal in politics, should be relieved of their work and responsibilities without delay; for the Lord will not co-operate with them. The tithe should not be used to pay any one for speechifying on political questions. Every teacher, minister, or leader in our ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work.** His influence must tell as a laborer together with God in winning souls to Christ, or his credentials must be taken from him. If he does not change, he will do harm, and only harm.... {Gospel Workers, Page 393.1

The churches must arouse. **The members must awake out of sleep and begin to inquire, How is the money which we put into the treasury being used?** The Lord desires that a close search be made. Are all satisfied with the history of the work for the past fifteen years? Where is the evidence of the co-working with God? KC 120.3

**As there are woes for those who preach the truth while they are unsanctified in heart and life, so there are woes for those who receive and maintain the unsanctified in the position which they cannot fill.** If the Spirit of God has not sanctified and made pure and clean the hands and heart of those who minister in sacred things, they will speak according to their own imperfect, deficient experience, and their counsels will lead astray from God those who look to them and trust in their judgment and experience. 2T 552

**Directly sent to worker (As Abraham did) --it is not withheld from storehouse**

**I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone.** If this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do 2MR 100.

**Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in a quiet and effective way. All the means is not to be handled by one agency or organization.** There is much business to be done conscientiously for the cause of God. SpM 421

Help is to be sought from every possible source. **There are men who can do the work of securing means for the cause, and when these are acting conscientiously and in harmony with the counsels of their fellow-laborers in the field which they represent, the hand of restraint is not to be laid upon them.** They are surely laborers together with Him who gave his life for the salvation of souls. SpM 421

Brethren Sutherland and Magan should be encouraged to solicit means for the support of their work. It is the privilege of these brethren to receive gifts from any of our people whom the Lord impresses to help. They should have means—God’s means—with which to work. **The Madison enterprise has been crippled in the past, but now it must go forward. If this work had been regarded in the right light, and had been given the help it needed, we should long ere this have had a prosperous work at Madison. Our people are to be encouraged to give of their means to this work which is preparing students in a sensible and creditable way to go forth into neglected fields to proclaim the soon coming of Christ.** SpM 422

To those in our conferences who have felt that they had authority to forbid the gathering of means in certain territory I now say: This matter has been presented to me again and again. I now bear my testimony in the name of the Lord to those whom it concerns. **Wherever you are, withhold your forbiddings. The work of God is not to be thus trammled. God is being faithfully served by these men whom you have been watching and criticizing. They fear and honor the Lord; they are laborers together with Him. God forbids you to put any yokes on the necks of his servants. It is the privilege of these workers to accept gifts or loans that they may invest them to help in doing an important work that greatly needs to be done. This wonderful burden of responsibility which some suppose God has placed upon them with their official position, has never been laid upon them. If men were standing free on the high platform of truth, they would never accept the responsibility to frame rules and regulations that hinder and cramp God’s chosen laborers in their work for the training of missionaries. When they learn the lesson that “All ye are brethren”, and realize that their fellow-workers may know just as well as they how to use in the wisest way the talents and capabilities entrusted to them, they will remove the yokes that are now binding their** SpM 422

You ask me what you shall do in view of the fact that so little help is given to that department of the work in which you are working. I would say, “Trust it with the Lord. **There is a way opened for you in regard to securing help for the Southern field. Appeal to the people. This is the only course you can pursue, under the circumstances. Send no statement of the situation through our religious papers; because it will not be honored. Send direct to the people. God’s ways are not to be counterworked by man’s ways. There are those who have means, and who will give large and small sums. Have this money come direct to your destitute portion of the vineyard.** The Lord has not specified any regular channel through which means should pass. SpM 498

“Present to the churches the true state of the long-neglected field, the long-neglected portion of My vineyard. There are hearts that will be touched and will

respond. **Call for means to come directly to the workers in the southern field.** I will impress hearts.” “These instructions have not been revoked, and are still in force.” GH April 1, 1905, Art. B, par. 2

Institutions that are God’s instruments to carry forward His work on the earth must be sustained. **Churches must be erected, schools established, and publishing houses furnished with facilities for doing a great work in the publication of the truth to be sent to all parts of the world. These institutions are ordained of God and should be sustained by tithes and liberal offerings. As the work enlarges, means will be needed to carry it forward in all its branches. Those who have been converted to the truth and been made partakers of His grace may become co-workers with Christ by making voluntary sacrifices and freewill offerings to Him.** And when the members of the church wish in their hearts that there would be no more calls for means, they virtually say that they are content that the cause of God shall not progress. 4T 464

### **Self-supporting work**

The Lord does not set limits about His workers in some lines as men are wont to set. In their work, Brethren Magan and Sutherland have been hindered unnecessarily. **Means have been withheld from them because in the organization and management of the Madison school, it was not placed under the control of the conference.** But the reasons why this school was not owned and controlled by the conference have not been duly considered. SpTB11 31.3

The Lord has instructed me that, from the first, the work in Huntsville and Madison should have received adequate help. **But instead of this help being rendered promptly there has been long delay. And in the matter of the Madison school, there has been a standing off from them because they were not under the ownership and control of some Conference. This is a question that should sometimes be considered, but it is not the Lord’s plan that means should be withheld from Madison, because they are not bound to the conference. The attitude which some of our brethren have assumed toward this enterprise shows that it is not wise for every working agency to be under the dictation of conference officers.** There are some enterprises under certain conditions, that will produce better results if standing alone.

When my advice was asked in reference to the Madison school, I said, Remain as you are. **There is danger in binding every working agency under the dictation of the conference. The Lord did not design that this should be. The circumstances were such that the burden bearers in the Madison school could not bind up their work with the conference. I knew their situation, and when many of the leading men in our conferences ignored them, because they did not place their school under conference dictation, I was shown that they would not be helped by making themselves amenable to the conference. They had better remain as led by God, amenable to Him, to work out His plans.** But this matter need not be blazed abroad. 8MR 202.

The **Lord's church is composed of living, working agencies, who derive their power to act from the Author and Finisher of their faith. They are to carry forward in harmony the great work resting on them. God has given you your work. But He has other instrumentalities, and to them He has given their work, that all may become, through sanctification of the truth, members of Christ's body, of His flesh and of His bones. Representing Christ, we act for time and for eternity;** and men, even worldly men, take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. 8T 174

Go Work for Souls.--Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: "Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 30. (1900) {Ev 382.1}

### **All funds not through one institution**

The matter was laid before me, which I was trying to present before the brethren. **There is altogether too much responsibility imparted to a few men in Battle Creek, and these men need the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, else they will lead God's heritage in false paths. The conferences are watching every move made at the center of the work. The different conferences have been led to look to the leading men at Battle Creek, feeling that no important move can be made without their approval. This tendency has been growing stronger, until it is a serious hindrance to the advancement of the work.** This arrangement should never have been. The Lord would have His people under His jurisdiction. They should look to God, inquiring of Him in faith, and follow on to know the working of His providence. {TM 320.3} **The arrangement that all moneys must go through Battle Creek and under the control of the few men in that place is a wrong way of managing. There are altogether too many weighty responsibilities given to a few men, and some do not make God their counselor. What do these men know of the necessities of the work in foreign countries? How can they know how to decide the questions which come to them asking for information? It would require three months for those in foreign countries to receive a response to their questions, even if there was no delay in writing.** {TM 321.1}

### **Thought question**

Do these statements contradict the oft quoted statement in 9T 247

"Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work." 9T 247

**Only if taken out of context...notice in the next few paragraphs she clarifies the statement and explains tithe use.**

**How to build a house of God**

**As the medical missionary work becomes more extended, there will be a temptation to make it independent of our conferences. But it has been presented to me that this plan is not right. The different lines of our work are but parts of one great whole.** They have one center. {6T 235.1}

**Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. Let not the workers leave the place without accomplishing this.** {6T 100.2}

In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to the work. **Often this renders it difficult to extend the work. As persons become interested in the truth, they are told by the ministers of other churches--and these words are echoed by the church members: "These people have no church, and you have no place of worship. You are a small company, poor and unlearned. In a short time the ministers will go away, and then the interest will die down.** Then you will give up all these new ideas which you have received." {6T 100.3}

"Some men or councils may say, **'That is just what we wish you to do. The Conference Committee will take your capital, and will appropriate it for this very object.'** But the Lord has made us Individually his stewards. We Each hold a solemn responsibility to invest this means Ourselves. A portion it is right to place in the treasury to advance the general interests of the work; but the steward of means will not be guiltless before God, unless, so far as he is able to do this, he shall use that means as circumstances shall reveal the necessity. We should be ready to help the suffering, and to set in operation plans to advance the truth in various ways. It is not in the province of the Conference or Any Other Organization to relieve us of this stewardship. If you lack wisdom, go to God; ask him for yourself, then work with an eye single to his glory.

**"By exercising your judgment, by giving where you see there is need in any line of the work, you are putting out your money to the exchangers. If you see in any locality that the truth is gaining a foothold, and there is no place of worship, then do something to meet the necessity. By your own action encourage others to act, in building a humble house for the worship of God.** Have an interest in the work in all parts of the field.

"While it is not your own property that you are handling yet you are made responsible for its wise investment, for its use or abuse. **God does not lay upon you the burden of asking the Conference or any council of men whether you shall use your means as you see fit to advance the work of God in destitute towns and cities, and impoverished localities. If the right plan had been followed, so much means would not have been used in some localities, and so little in other places where the banner of truth has not been raised. We are Not to Merge Our Individuality of Judgment Into Any Institution IN OUR WORLD. We are to look to God for wisdom, as did Daniel.**" 1888 MESSAGES pg 1442-1444

The house where God is worshiped should be in accordance with His character and majesty. ***There are small churches that ever will be small because they place their own interests above the interests of God's cause. While they have large, convenient houses for themselves, and are constantly improving their premises, they are content to have a most unsuitable place for the worship of God, where His holy presence is to dwell. They wonder that Joseph and Mary were obliged to find shelter in a stable, and that there the Saviour was born; but they are willing to expend upon themselves a large part of their means, while the house of worship is shamefully neglected. How often they say: "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." But the word of the Lord to them is: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?"*** {5T 268.3}

The house where Jesus is to meet with His people should be neat and attractive. ***If there are but few believers in a place, put up a neat but humble house, and by dedicating it to God invite Jesus to come as your guest. How does He look upon His people when they have every convenience that heart could wish, but are willing to meet for His worship in a barn, some miserable, out-of-the-way building, or some cheap, forsaken apartment? You work for your friends, you expend means to make everything around them as attractive as possible; but Jesus, the One who gave everything for you, even His precious life,—He who is the Majesty of heaven, the King of kings and Lord of lords,—is favored with a place on earth but little better than the stable which was His first home. Shall we not look at these things as God looks at them?*** Shall we not test our motives and see what kind of faith we possess? {5T 269.1}

There are some cases, however, ***in which a young church may not be able at once to bear the whole burden of erecting a house of worship. In these cases let the brethren in other churches help them. In some cases it may be better to hire some money than not to build. If a man has money, and, after giving what he can, will make a loan, either without interest or at a low rate, it would be right to use the money until the indebtedness can be lifted.*** But I repeat: If possible, church buildings should be dedicated free of debt. {6T 101.2}

In ***localities where believers are few, let two or three churches unite in erecting a humble building for a church school. Let all share the expense. It is high time for Sabbathkeepers to separate their children from worldly associations and place them under the very best teachers, who will make the Bible the foundation of all study.*** {6T 109.3}

"Every convert to the truth should be instructed in regard to the ***Lord's requirement for tithes and offerings. As churches are raised up, this work must be taken hold of decidedly and carried forward in the spirit of Christ. All that men enjoy, they receive from the Lord's great firm, and He is pleased to have His heritage enjoy His goods; but all who stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel are to acknowledge their dependence upon God and their accountability to Him by returning to the treasury a certain portion as His own.*** This is to be invested in missionary work in fulfillment of the commission given to His disciples by the Son of God:

All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6, Page 447.1

***Institutions that are God's instruments to carry forward His work on the earth must be sustained. Churches must be erected, schools established, and publishing houses furnished with facilities for doing a great work in the publication of the truth to be sent to all parts of the world. These institutions are ordained of God and should be sustained by tithes and liberal offerings.*** As the work enlarges, means will be needed to carry it forward in all its branches. Those who have been converted to the truth and been made partakers of His grace may become co-workers with Christ by making voluntary sacrifices and freewill offerings to Him.... {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, Page 464.2

### ***True Gospel Order and what is a Church of God***

***The Lord has not placed any one of His human agencies under the dictation and control of those who are themselves but erring mortals. He has not placed upon men the power to say, You shall do this, and you shall not do that. But there is a power exercised in Battle Creek that God has not given, and He will judge those who assume this authority. They have somewhat of the same spirit that led Uzzah to lay his hand on the ark to steady it, as though God was not able to care for His sacred symbols. Far less of man's power and authority should be exercised toward God's human agencies. Brethren, leave God to rule.*** {TM 347.3}

The Wrong Direction--***Brethren, do not depend on the President of your Conference or the President of the General Conference to think for you. God has given "to every man his work." When men look to the President of the Conference as their helper in all their difficulties, the bearer of their burdens, the counselor in their perplexities, they are doing the very opposite of that which Christ told them to do.***--Manuscript 11, 1883, p. 1. {ChL 63.2}

Some of our leading men are inclined to indulge the spirit manifested by the apostle John when he said: "***Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.***" ***Organization and discipline are essential, but there is now very great danger of a departure from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. What we need is less dependence upon mere form and ceremony, and far more of the power of true godliness. If their life and character are exemplary, let all work who will, in any capacity. Although they may not conform exactly to your methods, not a word should be spoken to condemn or discourage them. When the Pharisees desired Jesus to silence the children who sang His praise, the Saviour said: "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Prophecy must be fulfilled. So in these days, the work must be done. There are many departments of labor; let everyone act a part as best he can. The man with one talent is not to bury that in the earth. God has given to every***

**man his work according to his ability. Those to whom larger trusts and capabilities have been committed should not endeavor to silence others who are less able or experienced. Men with one talent may reach a class that those with two or five talents cannot approach. Great and small alike are chosen vessels to bear the water of life to thirsting souls. Let not those who preach the word lay their hands upon the humblest worker and say: "You must labor in this channel or not work at all." Hands off, brethren. Let everyone work in his own sphere, with his own armor on, doing whatever he can do in his humble way.** Strengthen his hands in the work. This is no time for pharisaism to control. Let God work through whom He will. The message must go. {5T 461.2}

**It is not in the order of God that any man, or any class of men, should assume that God has made them conscience for their brethren, or put forth their finite hand in a patronizing manner to control the Lord's delegated workers, thus endangering the safety of the Lord's heritage as well as their own, and retarding the work of God. God does not confine Himself to one man, or to a set of men, through whom to accomplish His work, but says of all, Ye "are laborers together with God."** This means that every believing soul should have a part to act in His sacred work, and every individual believer in Jesus Christ is to manifest to the world a symbol of Christ's sufficiency, to represent to His church the higher laws of the future immortal world, and in obedience to the mandates of Heaven that are without a parallel, they should reveal a depth of knowledge independent of human inventions. {TM 208.2}

The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work. **Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I have thought it was almost blasphemy. The voice of the Conference ought to be the voice of God, but it is not, because some in connection with it are not men of faith and prayer, they are not men of elevated principle.** There is not a seeking of God with the whole heart; there is not a realization of the terrible responsibility that rests upon those in this institution to mold and fashion minds after the divine similitude.-- Manuscript 37, 1901, p. 8 (April, 1901, Talk by Mrs. E. G. White in the Review Chapel regarding the Southern work). {ChL 20.4}

Daniel sought the Lord three times a day, in earnest prayer for wisdom and strength and courage to carry forward the enterprise of representing the only true God in wicked Babylon. **You will often be perplexed to know what to do next; but do not get pen and paper and write your perplexities to Battle Creek. There may be disagreement upon some points, but your Counselor is nigh. Bow before Him, and tell Him of everything you need. Can the men in Battle Creek give you light? They cannot understand your necessity.** Because they are not on the ground, they may say No to some things, when, had you asked of God, He would have answered, "Go forward, and I will be with you, and give you grace." {TM 325.1}

## God has a Church

**The true Seventh-day Adventist church is a group of equal sons and daughters of the King of heaven, heirs equal. Church force cannot produce true unity but has caused divisions. And has given rise to sects and parties innumerable. And there are not a few professing Christians who reject church organization on account of the use that has been made of creed and church power. The remedy for these deplorable evils is found in the proper use of simple organization and church order as set forth in the New Testament.... [The] minister who submits his ministry to a superior, a bishop, a president, or one in authority in the church to be sent out and directed in his ministry, cannot in the fullest sense be Christ's ambassador** (James White, "Leadership," Review and Herald, Dec. 1, 1874).

**God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"** (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church. {UL 315.5}

**Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides, let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness, in the city enclosed in prison walls. The glory of God has penetrated the prison walls, flooding with glorious beams of heavenly light the darkest dungeon. His saints may suffer, but their sufferings will, like the apostles of old, spread their faith and win souls to Christ and glorify His holy name. The bitterest opposition expressed by those who hate God's great moral standard of righteousness should not and will not shake the steadfast soul who trusts fully in God. . . .** {UL 315.6}

*"God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. 'Wilt thou then that we . . . gather them up?' was the question of the servant; but the master answered, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.' The gospel net draws not only good fish, but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His. {TM 61.2}*

Brethren, if you continue to be as idle, as worldly, as selfish as you have been, God will surely pass you by, and take those who are less self-caring, less ambitious for worldly honor, and who will not hesitate to go, as did their Master, without the camp, bearing the reproach. The work will be given to those who will take it, those who prize it, who weave its principles into their everyday experience. **God will choose humble men who are seeking to glorify His name and advance His cause rather than to honor and advance themselves. He will raise up men who have not so much worldly wisdom, but who are connected with Him, and who will seek strength and counsel from above.** {5T 461.1}

**Final Admonition**

Let anyone who wants to bring organization therefore study the pattern God started the work with because that's the only way the work will be finished. May God have mercy upon us and help us to move to the right direction

*Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.  
All things else I have forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be.  
Perish every fond ambition, all I've sought or hoped or known.  
Yet how rich is my condition! God and Heaven are still mine own.*

*Let the world despise and leave me, they have left my Savior, too.  
Human hearts and looks deceive me; Thou art faithful, Thou art true.  
O, 'tis not in grief to harm me, while thy love is left to me;  
O, 'twere not in joy to charm me, If that love be hid from me.*

*Soul, then know thy full salvation; rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;  
Joy to find in every station something still to do or bear:  
Think what Spirit dwells within thee; Think what Father's smiles are thine;  
Think that Jesus died to win thee, child of heaven, canst thou repine?*

*Haste then on from grace to glory, armed by faith, and winged by prayer,  
Heaven's eternal day's before thee, God's own hand shall guide thee there.  
Soon shall close thy earthly mission, soon shall pass thy pilgrim days;  
Hope soon change to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise.*

*Shalom  
Blessings*

*Compilation courtesy of Sami Wilberforce*