

JITHA'S
OFFERINGS

TRAMPLING
THE
CONSCIENCE

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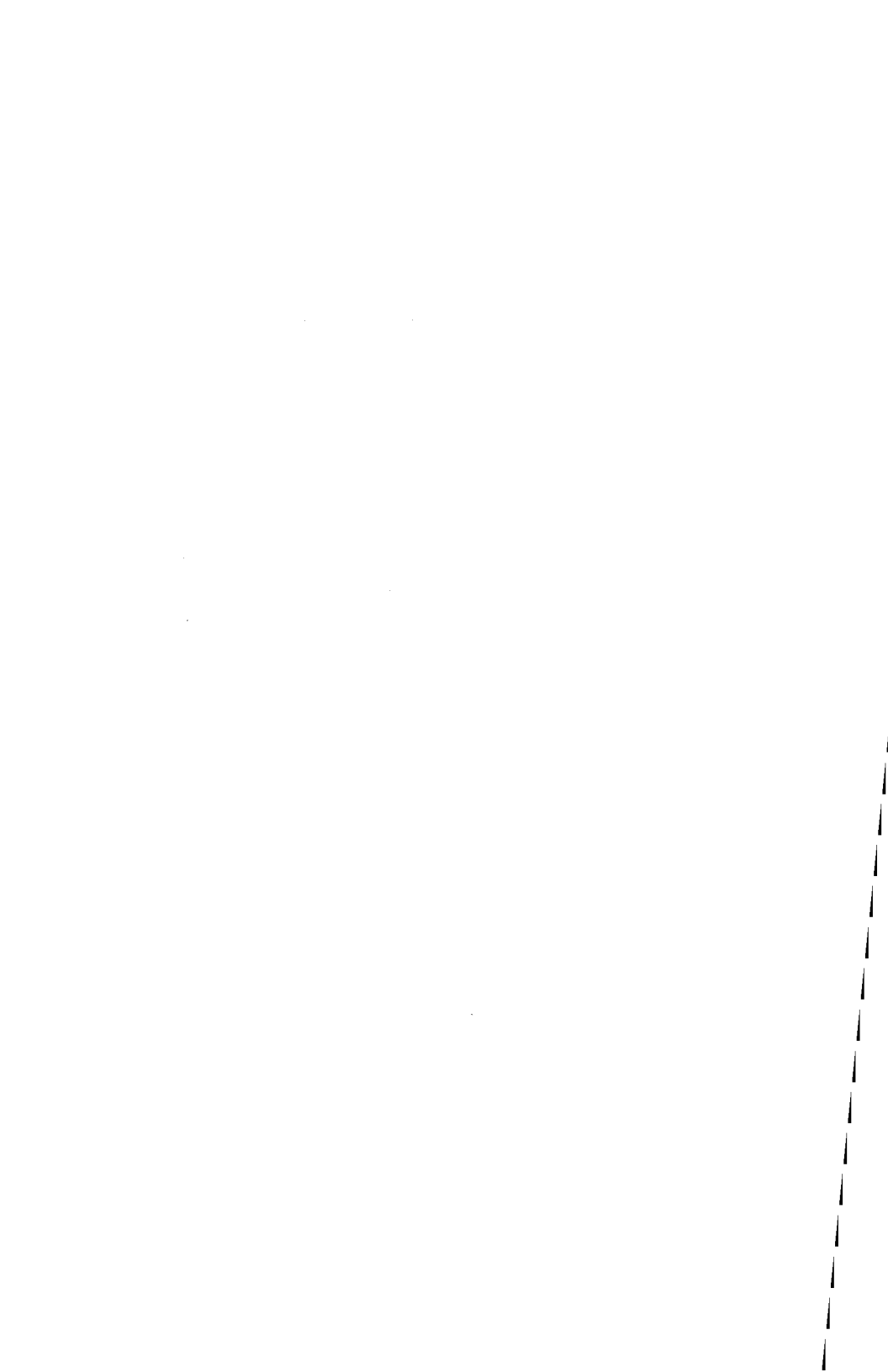
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I

Cooperation of Denominational and Self-Supporting Work

RECENTLY Colin was confronted by a fellow church member who had an extraordinary distaste for self-supporting work. It was evident that he saw self-supporting institutions as off-shoots and divisive influences within the church community. As he spoke, Colin challenged him with the thought that we would have little of the Bible if it excluded those portions written by self-supporting workers. Colin pointed out that the whole of the New Testament was written by self-supporting workers and that the Old Testament, outside of a few books such as the Kings, the Chronicles and Ezekiel (even Ezekiel was not likely to have been denominationally supported when he was a captive by the river of Chebar) had also been written by self-supporting workers. (It is possible that, after the introduction of the tithing system, Moses, a Levite, was tithe supported.) Certainly Daniel of the tribe of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah (Benjaminite) were not Levites. Those details seemed to make little impact upon the church member, so Colin explained that Christ and all His disciples were self-supporting workers, and their ministry and themselves were sustained by friendly supporters as evidenced by the fact Judas was their treasurer.

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Luke 8:1-3

This he [Judas] said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. John 12:6

For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. John 13:29

Colin also reminded the church member that Jesus had chosen a self-supporting worker as the one to baptize Him. Though John the Baptist was a Levite he was led by the Lord into self-supporting work in a similar way to which a considerable number of ministers today have been led into self-supporting work.

This dialogue, along with quite a few others that we have had in the past, indicates that there is a lack of understanding of the fact that self-supporting work is God ordained. Few, even of those in self-supporting work, seem to understand that self-supporting work is as divinely ordained as is denominational work. The two are meant to work together, not the one under the other, and to clasp hands for the mighty challenge of finishing the gospel commission upon the earth.

Just as God utilized self-supporting workers (the prophets), and denominational workers (the priests), in His cause in the days of Israel, so today He has designed self-supporting and denominational workers to cooperate as equal arms of His divine mission. The issue in God's church has never been self-supporting work versus denominational work, but truth versus error, and righteousness versus unrighteousness. Though present day self-supporting workers make no claim to be prophets, nevertheless they have been called of God to do a work for Him outside the conference structure. In this feature of their work they parallel the prophets of the past.

At this point it will be helpful to explain the usual usage of the term "self-supporting worker" by Sister White. It does not necessarily refer to a person who works in a regular occupation part-time and then ministers part-time. However such a one is

* Life Sketches, pp. 384, 385.

indeed self-supporting. Sister White employed the term, as in the case of the apostle Paul, to refer to those who have a means of secular employment to use if need be, but who more usually minister full-time supported by means supplied directly by God's people and not necessarily from the denominational treasury. Self-supporting workers may or may not be connected with an institution. Self-supporting ministry is not to be confused with self-sustaining ministry in which the laborer is fully sustained by his own endeavors.

Even those who appreciate self-supporting work sometimes express the view that if the denominational workers were uplifting truth as they ought, then there would be no need for self-supporting ministries. In this conclusion they err. God has ever seen fit to use these two arms of His work in cooperation. A common misconception is that self-supporting ministries were authorized for the U.S. Southland because of the deep poverty in this region at the time, but are not authorized for other parts of the world. Sister White did not limit her call for self-supporting workers to the U.S. Southern states. For example she called for self-supporting workers to work in large cities such as London.

Are there not those in this congregation who will settle in London to work for the Master? Are there not those who will go to that great city as self-supporting missionaries?

Life Sketches, 384.

It is with great care that we have decided to present the evidence concerning self-supporting work as it affects the explosive issue of tithes and offerings. We have hesitated for years since beginning to prepare this material for publication, having had regard for Sister White's counsel to Elder Watson, President of the Colorado Conference give notoriety to this issue. We believe it was possible that such counsel called for great care to be exercised on the topic. (See chapter 13).

However those supporting the concept that the Conference is the only storehouse for the return of tithe (some also say offerings) have chosen to ignore this counsel or have no knowledge

of it and have taken advantage of the relatively few presentations by faithful self-supporting Seventh-day Adventists on the subject of tithe. Generally speaking, few pastors or members have studied the divine counsel and therefore remain ignorant or are held prisoners to their own prejudices on one side or the other.

Some believe that Church leaders or pastors have the final authority to decide this issue, but this book upholds the belief that the only acceptable authority is that which is provided from inspired sources. The authors firmly believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is established upon the foundation that, "We have no creed but the Bible," and, "The Bible and the Bible only is the basis for our faith and practice." To reject God's Word in favor of man's word is Catholicism.

We are presenting this book consistent with Sister White's counsel to Elder Butler, General Conference President. Elder Butler had printed his book on the Law in Galatians after Sister White had urged Elder Waggoner not to publish his contrary view. Once Elder Butler had published his book, Sister White stated that it was only fair that Elder Waggoner publish his manuscript.* It was not the Lord's desire, but the act of Elder Butler had made it necessary. So we believe it is now necessary to present the essence of our long time study of the tithe theme which is so little understood by God's people. This conviction has been greatly strengthened by the increasing reports around the world of faithful tithe-payers being removed from church office or, in some cases, disfellowshipped because they have felt called to return their tithe to faithful self-supporting ministries.

Colin has spoken to conference ministers, including two North American Division presidents, on some of these issues. He has urged the leaders to use their considerable influence to recommend that articles which attack self-supporting ministries for accepting tithe cease to be published, but up to the time of publishing such articles continue to appear in denominational publications. Examples of such presentations in recent times are (1) Roger Coon, "Ellen White and Tithe," *Adventist Review* Supple-

* 8MR, 311.

ment, September 7, 1991. (2) Cyril Miller, "Our Union President Shares His Views About Sending Tithe to Independent Ministries," *Southwestern Union Record* Supplement, January, 1992. (3) Glyn Parfitt, "Independent Ministries and the Tithe," *South Pacific Record*, March 9, 1996. As will be seen from the inspired statements in this book, the issue comes down finally to one issue—whether we follow the Word of *God* or the word of *Man*.

It is our desire that those who read this book will do so with a Christ-like Spirit. Already far too much bitterness has been generated upon this topic by those on both sides of the issue. A truth is not something to be debated, it is something to be carefully studied and followed. Because the returning of tithes and offerings is a salvation issue, it is a study of utmost significance to the converted believer.

2

Tithe Then and Now

GROWING up in Australia, we had not so much as heard of self-supporting work. As we look back on our experience we realize that we had read references to self-supporting work in the Spirit of Prophecy, yet we had not comprehended it because no self-supporting ministry then existed in Australia. It was not until 1968, when Colin was chairman of the Education Department at Avondale College, that he first was introduced to self-supporting work through a student who was contemplating attending Wildwood Institute in Georgia (which he subsequently did). As Colin read the brochure concerning this institution he was surprised to find that it did not appear to be an off-shoot organization. It was a little later that Russell learned of self-supporting work.

Of course these earlier experiences did not raise in our minds any thoughts concerning the tithe issue and may never have done so had not God called Colin into self-supporting work in 1978. The tithe issue was not on his mind as he joined Weimar Institute as the foundation Dean of the College. But soon after, Colin had to confront the issue for the first time. A General Conference Departmental director had visited Weimar. He closely questioned Colin on the purpose and policies of the College. As he left he handed Colin a check "to help the work at Weimar." Next morning when Colin examined the check, he noted it was written for \$250, but what surprised him was that in the Memo was written "TITHE."

Colin discussed the matter with other Weimar administrators. They confirmed that from time to time tithe was sent to the Institute. Colin was told that the Institute sent the tithe they received to the Northern California Conference. Colin protested

that if it was inappropriate for the Institution to receive tithe, it should be returned to the donor with a note of gratitude, but presenting the reasons why it was inappropriate for a self-supporting institution to receive tithe, should this be the evidence of divine counsel.

All Weimar administrators acknowledged that all had not studied the tithe issue, whereupon it was agreed that they would study this issue. Several weeks later they came together to share their findings. Colin had made a careful study of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy and had been greatly enlightened to discover strong evidence that the Spirit of Prophecy did not discriminate between denominational and self-supporting workers in respect of tithe. He learned that no restrictions should bind church members to return tithe only to the conference in which they resided. It was to be almost a decade and a half before Colin would confirm these principles from the New Testament writings also.

Colin was surprised that the “study” of the other administrators at Weimar had not been of divine counsel, but had taken the form of making enquiries from a range of denominational leaders, including General Conference men, local conference men and men leading in the Media Center ministries. These administrators reported that overwhelmingly the denominational leaders had supported the concept that Weimar could accept tithe providing it did not solicit tithe. It should be used for appropriate ministerial purposes. That then became Weimar’s practice.

But the response of one of the leaders at the Media Center ministry raised further questions. His response to the question of tithe usage posed by a Weimar administrator was, “Take tithe! I’d take it with both hands. That is what we do.” This rather incautious comment nevertheless led to the realization that all the Media Center ministries and other media ministries not associated with the Media Center were receiving very significant support from church members’ tithe. This group included Faith For Today, Voice of Prophecy, It Is Written, Breath of Life, Quiet Hour, and Amazing Facts. Thus the denomination appropriately supported the concept of multiple channels for the return of tithe.

When Colin joined the founders of Hartland, the tithe issue soon surfaced again. As some of the staff and administrators had

not faced this issue before, the tithe question was reinvestigated with the conclusions that were consistent with those formed at Weimar. Colin and the Business Manager of Hartland also discussed the issue with the Potomac Conference President in 1984. The dialogue proceeded as follows:

Colin: From time to time we are receiving tithe donations. What do you suggest?

Potomac President: Well, they are not sending their tithe to Hartland for you to send it to the Potomac Conference.

Colin: That is true, but if we did not accept the tithe we would not forward it to the Potomac Conference. We would return it to the donor with a suitable letter.

Potomac President: I think you would do more harm than good if you did that.

Colin: Well, what do you suggest?

Potomac President: If you don't go out soliciting tithe, I'd quietly use it for appropriate work.

This represented the view of many General Conference leaders and some other leaders less than a generation ago. Colin recalls talking to a retired General Conference vice-president who, for a number of years chaired the Media Center board. Colin enquired of him, "What did you do about all the tithe the ministries of the Media Center were receiving?" He responded that he had never raised the issue. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he said, "Come to think of it, I didn't really want to know." That was the response of a wise leader.

Unfortunately the rapid turn-around by denominational leaders on the tithe issue appears to have been stimulated by a rather tasteless and crude cartoon depicted in a publication by a self-supporting leader in 1987. The cartoon portrayed a grossly overweight denominational worker eagerly partaking of a sumptuous meal while a skinny self-supporting worker was picking up the crumbs from the floor. Accompanying this was a strong article hardly veiling a call for his ministry to be supported by tithe. Understandably the publication enraged many denominational leaders. Tragically it led to oppressive measures against self-supporting work.

New leadership has arisen and, apparently unmindful of sacred counsel, it has moved with considerable rapidity to overthrow the principles that had guided its predecessors. Rigid rules are being established in an attempt to bind up God's people. Annual Councils, for example, have developed policies that require Conferences or Missions which receive tithe from members outside their borders to return that tithe to the Conference or Mission where the donor resides. Thankfully many Conferences and Missions are ignoring this edict. Many overseas missions would collapse if they followed this directive, which is in contradistinction to the counsel of the Lord. Though the following statement does not refer to tithe, nevertheless we cannot escape the broad principle that is enunciated in its counsel.

God grant that the voices that have been so quickly raised to say that all the money invested in the work must go through the appointed channel at Battle Creek, shall not be heard. The people to whom God has given His means are amenable to Him alone. It is their privilege to give direct aid and assistance to missions.

Spalding-Magan Collection, 176-7.

When Russell was a Departmental Director in the Southeast Asia Union many thousands of dollars of tithe money were sent to him from Australia, mostly by church members who felt convicted that they should support the gospel work in Southeast Asia. Russell, of course, did not retain a single cent of that money for personal use since he was receiving an adequate denominational salary. In consultation with denominational leadership the money was distributed to faithful missions and the Voice of Prophecy in Southeast Asia. There was never a thought of returning it to Australia. Further, when Russell was president of Bangkok Adventist Hospital it was only the tithe from the United States, largely sent by returned physicians and other missionaries, which kept the Thailand Mission solvent. In this God was good. He knew the needs of His work in that mighty nation of 65 million souls and He placed it in the hearts of faithful believers to meet the needs of the gospel commission in that land.

Nevertheless the North American Division has sadly exercised authority which heaven has forbidden. It has legislated that all ministries return the tithe they receive to the respective conferences in which they reside. Unfortunately the Media ministries have very reluctantly yielded to this improper authority.

This is a direct denial of the God-ordained, soul-saving evangelism of these ministries. It is inconceivable that men such as Elders J. L. Tucker, H.M.S. Richards, William Fagal, Joe Crews, and C. D. Brooks who through their media ministries have led tens of thousands to the Seventh-day Adventist faith should not appropriately receive tithe for the work of their ministries. We hasten to add that to the best of our knowledge, these leaders or other self-supporting ministry leaders we know well, do not accept tithe for their personal use. There would be grave danger in such a practice. The money is received for the Lord's ministry and is then used for appropriate tithe purposes. However, the acquiescence of these ministries to the improper North American Division actions have given credence to the validity of a boycott of those ministries which have held to the God-given principles of inspiration and have declined to yield to unsupported demands of leaders concerning the matter of tithe.

This directive of North American Division leaders has led to another tragic situation. The majority of these ministries which have yielded to leadership requirements would collapse or at the least be greatly diminished if they truly rejected all tithe income. Unfortunately this requirement has generated game playing and deceit. Some denominational leaders could hardly be unmindful that the tithe incomes of these ministries have suddenly "declined" dramatically after their reluctant agreement to return the tithe that they receive from donors to the local conferences in which they are located. Further, some leaders can hardly be unaware of the ploys that have led to the unprecedented decline in the tithe received by most of these ministries while the non-tithe income to most of them has made notable increases. The reason is not difficult to determine. Ministries are carefully encouraging donors to refrain from identifying tithe in the memo of their checks. Any other term is acceptable. Thus terms such as "Offering," "Donation," "Gift," "Ministerial Work," "Evangelism," "For your ministry" are used when tithe is sent. The ministries are under no obligation to return these funds to the conference. Thus the Conferences are receiving little of the expected increase in the tithe while much still goes to these ministries under different designations.

While we understand the desperate financial needs that have encouraged such deceit, we deplore the hypocrisy and dangers which are entailed. Tithe is provided for a sacred purpose. Any

effort to mask its identity leads to some tithe being used improperly. Here is documentation of two instances of how this deception is taking place.

The first letter was written by the leader of one of the best known Media Center ministries. The lady to whom this leader was responding had asked in a letter if that ministry accepted tithe. The leader left no doubt that he did not wish to put to paper his desire for her to return tithe to the ministry. How sad that a noble ministry is reduced to this level of communication by unlawful denominational actions. By the way, the leader who wrote this letter is the same one who urged Weimar leaders in 1978 to take tithe "with both hands."

April 15, 1992

I've tried to find your phone number from the operator, but apparently you do not have one. The question that you've asked me [concerning whether the ministry accepts tithe] in your letter is a very sensitive one and I would appreciate telephoning you about the matter.

In the meantime I do appreciate so much you and others who are willing to support the gospel ministry of ----- I appreciate so much your prayers and your willingness to support God's work in a financial way. We have many ordained ministers right here working side by side, committed to proclaiming the three angels' messages!

I must close this letter for now.

In Jesus,

The second letter was written by the leader of one of the best known, well supported and respected self-supporting ministries, also doing an excellent work worldwide. But the one who received this letter decided he could not support this ministry because of what he adjudged to be a blatant effort to deceive.

----- 1992

Dear -----

We sincerely thank you for your check of \$---- for ----- mission ----- . Though it is much needed, I have to return it to you because you indicated on the check that it is for tithe. The

reason that I am required to return your check is because we do not knowingly receive tithe funds.

Some years ago ----- board of directors decided not to receive tithe funds. Though we are not supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church we do recommend that the church members send their tithe to the S.D.A. Church. We know that some of our friends are supporting our missionary pastors with their tithe without telling us that it is tithe. We believe that God guides His people in this matter, and we totally rely on His providential care.

Thank you again for your interest in ----- and their ministry. Please keep them and this work in your prayers.

Yours in His service,

The fact cannot be ignored that this recent denominational requirement that all tithe be returned to the Conference system appears to have been generated principally by the desire to curtail the provision of funding for self-supporting ministries with the courage to warn God's people of apostasy, lowered standards and blasphemous worship services in our midst. In the fulfillment of this desire the organization has had scant success. The continued emphasis on this matter has caused many alerted church members to study this question. It has, indeed, stimulated the writing of this book, not in order to raise further tithe funds for self-supporting work, for God is and has been well able to do that, but that God's truth in this matter should be brought before His people. Nor is this book written to decrease the tithe support for faithful denominational ministers. They should be tithe supported. Neither was this book written to encourage congregationalism. God ordained a representative form of government for His church (see Standish & Standish, *The Temple Cleansed*.)

Numbers of self-supporting ministries who had been accepting tithe for many years suddenly desisted when the General Conference attempted to enforce a ban on self-supporting ministries accepting tithe. But if these ministries really believed that divine counsel was opposed to the receipt of tithe outside the conference structure, surely they were duty-bound to inform their supporters that under no circumstances did they wish to receive tithe, and plainly state that tithe should not be sent to the ministry under another name such as offering or donation. We could

respect any ministry's conviction if it did this, even though it would be inconsistent with inspired counsel on the matter of tithe. Few of these ministries have adopted this approach.

If these ministries believe they have taken tithe improperly, each of these self-supporting institutions and Media Center ministries should now be making restitution to the conference for all the tithe they have previously used in their ministries.

To fail to fulfill *both* of these requirements casts doubt upon the real convictions of these ministries in the matter of tithe. To go even further and intimate their willingness to accept tithe, if designated differently, certainly provides strong evidence that there is no true belief in the single channel theory. It would not be evil surmising in such cases to conclude that such ministries have yielded to the dictates of man and disregarded divine counsel.

While not suggesting that the *Church Manual* has inspired authority, nevertheless the use of the tithe issue to discredit self-supporting ministries which accept tithe for the furtherance of the gospel mission, and to disfellowship members who return tithe to self-supporting ministries, is inconsistent with the relevant statement in the *Church Manual*.

Members Not to Be Dropped for Pecuniary Reasons. —A member should never be dropped from the church rolls on account of one's inability or failure to render financial help to any of the causes of the church. Church membership rests primarily on a spiritual basis, yet it is the duty of every member to support the work of the church in a financial way to the extent of one's ability, but an individual should never be deprived of membership simply through inability or failure to render financial help to any of the causes of the church.

Church Manual, 1990 edition, 163.

We believe those actions taken by leaders in demanding that all tithe be returned to the Conference reflects ignorance rather than a blatant turning away from the counsel of the Lord. Our only desire in presenting these details is to help God's people know the truth, exercise their God-given freedom to act upon these truths and stand by the principles of God, rejecting human authority when it is inconsistent with the Word of God. We also have the hope that faithful self-supporting institutions which have yielded to wrongly exercised authority will reassess their rights

and responsibilities under the guidance of God's Word. Above all we pray that denominational leaders, upon reading this book, will recognize the mistakes that have been made and will speedily redress this sorry situation.

3

The Appropriate Role of Self-Supporting Ministries

THE ENTIRE emphasis of Sister White's counsel is upon self-supporting and denominational workers working together *with* one another rather than one working coercively *under* the other. The pattern that the servant of the Lord has given is the perfect pattern for both conference and self-supporting workers to follow. *After all, it is God's plan.*

That our earlier leaders moved a considerable way toward following this counsel, while not fully accepting it, can be seen from the actions taken by the General Conference session of 1909.

"General Conference Recommendations:

"Whereas, The Southland of the United States and the mission fields offer many opportunities for self-supporting school work; and,—

"Whereas, Not a few of our people are planning to undertake this line of work and,—

"Whereas, A close, friendly relationship should exist between the organized work of the denomination and these self-supporting schools; therefore,—

"We recommend,—

"1. That the educational departments of our organized work, where these schools are located, provide for their representation in the conference educational departments.

"2. That the educational departments assist in the selection of those who shall be encouraged to enter this line of work.

"3. That endorsement be given to those selected who need

financial assistance, that those from whom funds are solicited may know whom to assist.

“4. That the organized work assist in locating said schools, and advise in the expenditure of funds secured from our people.

“5. That the closest bonds of sympathy and co-operation be maintained between these self-supporting schools and our organized work.

“6. That the educational departments be encouraged to so cooperate with these self-supporting schools that the utmost possible help may be rendered, and the best results accomplished.

“We further recommend, That our stronger conferences search out and encourage suitable persons to undertake this self-supporting work, and the workers thus selected be encouraged to pursue a course of instruction at the Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute [Madison College].

The General Conference and the Southern Union Conference are putting forth special efforts to carry out this instruction.”

General Conference Bulletin, 1909, 372, 373.

Unfortunately this action, which to the best of our knowledge has never been revoked, has been lost to the knowledge of all but a handful of denominational administrators and self-supporting leaders.

It is not difficult to see how history repeats itself as leaders of today express similar sentiments to those expressed by leaders at the turn of the century. Fortunately, we do have the divine counsel of the servant of the Lord on these matters. A typical statement from today’s leaders is as follows:

Today a growing number of independent ministries compete vigorously for a larger share of Adventists’ tithe dollars—money urgently needed for the main work of the church.

Southwestern Union Record, 1992.

The emphasis of attack has been directed largely against the acceptance of tithe by many self-supporting institutions. There are those, however, who believe that to send any funds (tithe or offerings) to self-supporting institutions is to deplete the treasury of the Church. Such a view reveals a faulty view of the Church. The conference work is, of course, a major part of the work of

the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but it is not *the* Church. God's church consists of all members. Sister White talks of the Conference work and the self-supporting work. When Sister White wrote the *Testimonies to the Church*, she did not direct the messages to church administrators alone. Clearly by the term *church* she meant all members. When we recognize that the church designates the whole Seventh-day Adventist membership, then the issue takes on a different perspective. The self-supporting work is as much a part of the Seventh-day Adventist work as the denominational work. Of course we hasten to state that unfaithful self-supporting ministers, like unfaithful denominational ministers, must bear the consequences of accepting tithes and offerings with unholy hands. Many self-supporting ministries are doing a noble work around the world in soul winning and in forwarding the mission of God's church. We have been greatly disappointed, for example, with the denominational failure to provide literature for our members in Africa and other less affluent parts of the world. But many faithful self-supporting ministries have sought to fill the void to the extent that it is evident to us that most of the literature circulating in these countries has been provided by lay ministries. There is ample evidence that God has declared that these faithful ministries appropriately share in the receiving of the resources of the church.

The 1992 statement in the *Southwestern Union Record* represents a serious neglect of God's counsel. The self-supporting institutions are not in competition for the tithe dollar, but there are many who conscientiously believe that because of apostasy of a great magnitude in their local churches and elsewhere, that members, pastors and leaders must honor God by seeking to have the resources entrusted to them used specifically for the finishing of genuine, productive work for God on earth.

In 1907 Sister White wrote the following letter to Professor Percy Magan, the Academic Dean of Madison College:

Some have entertained the idea that because the school at Madison is not owned by a conference organization, those who are in charge of the school should not be permitted to call upon our people for the means that is greatly needed to carry on their work. This idea needs to be corrected. In the distribution of money that comes from the Lord's treasury, you are entitled

to a portion just as verily as are those connected with our needy enterprises that are carried forward in harmony with the Lord's instruction.

The Lord Jesus will one day call to account those who would so tie your hands that it is almost impossible for you to move in harmony with the Lord's biddings. "The silver and the gold is mine, saith the Lord, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." You and your associates are not novices in educational work, and when you are in stress for means with which to advance the work, you are just as much entitled to ask for that which you need as are other men to present the necessities of the work in which they are engaged.

You have in the past done much to bring means into circulation in the work of God. And you need not now feel troubled about accepting gifts and free-will offerings; for you will need them in the work of preparing young men and women to labor in the Lord's vineyard. As you carry on this work in harmony with the Lord's bidding, you are not to be kept on a constant strain to know how to secure the means you need in order to go forward. The Lord forbids the setting up of walls and bands around workers of experience who are faithfully acting their God-appointed part.

Much precious time has been lost because man-made rules and restrictions have been sometimes placed above the plans and purposes of God. In the name of the Lord I appeal to our conference workers to strengthen and support *and labor in harmony with our brethren at Madison*, who are carrying forward a work that God has appointed them

Spalding-Magan Collection, 411-12, emphasis added.

This last paragraph offers powerful support for the principle that it is conference men who are bidden to work in harmony with the self-supporting work as well as the reverse. Sister White ever saw the self-supporting and the denominational workers laboring together; not one laboring under the direction of the other.

It is important to recognize the issues enunciated in this letter. Self-supporting institutions are "entitled to a portion" of the means "from the Lord's treasury." Dr. Ralph Larson has discovered in excess of one hundred and sixty quotations where Sister White includes tithe in the term "means." One such instance is

quoted by way of illustration.

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.

Special Testimonies Series A-No 1, 27, emphasis added.

It will be noted that Sister White also refers to the appropriateness of self-supporting institutions receiving funds from the Lord's treasury. There are those who claim that the Lord's treasury must be used only for denominational work, but this statement clearly denies such an assertion. If all Seventh-day Adventists would understand this, it would answer many questions, reduce confusion and avoid many divisions among God's people. Indeed, Sister White made appeals for conferences to support self-supporting ministries.

I appeal to our brethren in South Dakota to help in the emergency, and to make a liberal gift to the Madison School.

Letter written by Sister White to Elder E. G. Hayes, President of the South Dakota Conference, February 5, 1907.

In spite of the constant letters that Sister White had written to Elder A. G. Daniells and others on the issue, in 1908 the members of the General Conference Committee demonstrated their lack of understanding concerning the need for liberality. Thus the General Conference committee voted binding restrictions on those soliciting funds for worthy needs. While this action was directed at denominational institutions it was also sure to have had its impact upon self-supporting ministries.

Resolved, that any special enterprises for which donations are solicited from the people should first receive the sanction of the General Conference and the union Conference in which such enterprise is undertaken. And that any person sent out to solicit such donations first receive suitable credentials from the union Conference from which he comes, and that satisfactory arrangements be made, certified in writing, with the union and local conferences in which he wishes to solicit before he enters upon his work.

Report in the *Review and Herald*, May 14, 1908.

Sister White was quick to respond to this unwise enactment. Her

response was strong and unequivocal:

When I read the resolution published in the *Review*, placing so many restrictions upon those who may be sent out to gather funds for the building up of institutions in needy and destitute fields, I was sorry for the many restrictions. I can but feel sad, for unless the converting grace of God come into the conferences, a course will be taken that will bring the displeasure of God upon them. We have had enough of the spirit of forbidding.

Representations have been made to me of a work that does not bear the divine credentials. The prohibitions that have been bound about labors of those who would go forth to warn the people in the cities of the soon-coming judgments, should every one be removed. None are to be hindered from bearing the message of present truth to the world. Let the workers receive their directions from God. When the Holy Spirit impresses the believer to do a certain work for God, leave the matter to him and the Lord.

Letter written by Sister White to officers of the General Conference, May 26, 1908.

The resolution presented in the May 14 *Review and Herald* is all the more surprising when we recognize how strongly Sister White had written to the brethren just a few months earlier:

To those in our conferences who have felt that they have all authority to forbid the gathering of means in certain territory I would 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 thus to be trammelled. God is being faithfully served by these men, and you have been watching and criticizing. They fear and honor the Lord; they are laborers together with Him. God forbid you to put any yokes upon 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 needs to be done. This wonderful burden of responsibility that some suppose God has placed upon them with their official position, has never been laid upon them. If men were standing firm 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. Let-

ter written by Sister White to those bearing responsibilities in Washington and other centers, dated January 6, 1908.

It has been a great grief for the authors to see the issue of tithe used to divide the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. Comparatively small amounts of tithe have been returned to self-supporting institutions. Sister White, in describing the situation pertaining to her day, said that she and a few others had been directed of the Lord to help needy ministers in the South. It was certainly the exception then, and so it is today that a comparatively small number of members have been impressed to return their tithe to self-supporting work. The denominational work must be supported, but only if it is true to its divine commission. Equally, self-supporting work must be supported only if it is doing God's bidding. Those who are preaching the gospel should be supported by the gospel. There were black ministers in Sister White's day who, though ordained, were not supported from the conference. Sister White followed this inspired principle in supporting from her tithe and the tithe of other women these black ministers:

The white laborers for the white people in the South are paid from the tithe, but for several years the Southern Missionary Society have supported from two to five ordained ministers among the colored people . . . but the conferences have not allowed the tithe to go to their support. . . .

Some people have placed their tithe in mother's hands and she has forwarded (it) to our Society, promptly, to help the payroll of the ministers. Recently three sisters in Colorado have sent their tithe to pay the colored ministers in the South. Considerable disturbance was created in regard to this by the President of the Colorado Conference. . . .

We keep a separate account of the small sums of tithe that come to us in this way and apply them entirely to pay the ministers working for the colored people. J. Edson White letter to Elder Arthur G. Daniells, March 26, 1905 quoted in Coon, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15.

What was done for these ordained Afro-American workers in the South in the first decade of this century has a remarkable parallel with what is being done for ordained ministers (as well as Bible

as Bible teachers, medical missionary doctors, Bible workers) serving in self-supporting work today.

The situation is being presented today by not a few church administrators that the appropriate use of the tithe by self-supporting organizations is something new, but all the major self-supporting organizations have received significant sums of tithe over the years, and surely they should receive tithe.

Colin was once informed that only about twenty-seven percent of Seventh-day Adventist families in North America return a regular tithe to the denomination. While some tithe can be accounted for by Seventh-day Adventist Church members returning tithe outside their local conference or to self-supporting work, the sad truth is that most Seventh-day Adventists are robbing God of tithes and offerings. Surely the challenge to both denominational and self-supporting workers is to concentrate upon inspiring all members to receive the divine blessing that always accompanies faithful tithing. This would refocus both arms of God's church away from the unprofitable acrimony that presently pertains on the tithe issue.

As we have surveyed the objective evidence, it is plain that God's plan for cooperation between self-supporting and denominational work has been greatly breached. If God's counsel were followed today, there would be little concern over the comparatively few tithe dollars being sent to self-supporting ministries. After all, the denomination channel is presently receiving close to \$1,000,000,000 US tithe per annum. The evidence presented in this book is offered as a basis for that reform which will bring a harmonious union of all God's faithful laborers in the proclamation of the everlasting gospel. How the authors long for this unity.

Since no dedicated denominational administrator would desire to take a position or to present counsel contrary to the plain testimony of our Lord, it is mandatory that such men search out these divine counsels so that they may enact them and thus strengthen God's work. If Sister White's counsels and example, inspired by our God, were studied and accepted, no faithful denominational administrator would forbid the appropriate use of tithe by self-supporting workers. Nor would any faithful self-supporting ministry yield to such a demand.

4

The Appointed Channels Part I

ELSEWHERE (See chapter 11) we have cited God's direction that Battle Creek (then General Conference Headquarters) should not be the only recipient of church funds.* Present day church administrators who promote the concept of a single channel are not consistent with divine counsel.

God has warned us through His servant that He works His own designs.

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.

Testimonies to Ministers, 300.

On the one hand it would be folly to interpret this statement to mean that any man may rush recklessly ahead with his own plans without consultation with others of experience and fidelity. But, on the other hand, we must not permit the work of the Lord to become hidebound by rules and regulations enacted by men, even by men in high ecclesiastical authority. God will not have His work restricted by man's devisings. Frequently some leaders hold back the progress of God's work by their efforts to exert control over the ministries of others or by the enactment of unnecessarily restrictive regulations.

It must be appreciated that the church organization as we know it today will be thoroughly reformed at the time of the spread of the Loud Cry message.

Under the showers of the latter rain the inventions of man, the human machinery, will at times be swept away, the boundary of man's authority will be as broken reeds, and the Holy

* *Testimonies to Ministers, 321.*

Spirit will speak through the living, human agent, with convincing power. 2SM, 58-59.

During this most difficult time when global laws will be enacted by governmental bodies, God will still lead His Church to complete the gospel commission.

The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 107.

He will call men from the plow and from other occupations to give the last note of warning to perishing souls. 9T, 170.

Most startling messages will be borne by men of God's appointment. 9T, 137.

Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. *Great Controversy*, 606.

It is certain that this situation will come about only at the time of the completion of the sealing work in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Until that time God will use both faithful self-supporting and faithful denominational workers to pursue the gospel commission. The great tragedy is that denominational administrators are increasingly following a policy of dismissal of faithful denominational workers. Therefore increasingly the burden of taking God's last message to the world is falling upon self-supporting workers. Thus, in an unexpected manner, denominational leaders are preparing the way for the day when all God's workers in His vineyard will be self-supporting. And praise the Lord! many of the defrocked faithful denominational ministers have already joined the noble band of self-supporting workers; faithfully proclaiming God's last message of love to the world.

Below we quote some lengthy passages. The reader will be fully rewarded in reading these balanced messages concerning God's appointed channels, for they will open up the nature of

God's appointed channels to those who prayerfully study their content. Elder W. C. White spoke of his mother's convictions in this matter. She did see a strong role for the church organization in the spread of truth, but that role was one of facilitation, not of domination and obstruction. Elder White stated,

Mother bears a very strong testimony against the medical missionary workers, the college men, or those engaged in the publishing work, entering the field without consultation and sanction from the General Conference Committee, and especially if working with any spirit of rivalry, and endeavoring to build up their work by making unfavorable comparisons, showing that other branches of the work are inferior to theirs, that they may raise money for the institutions which they represent. Her views are that we should do now as has been done in the past—let the men representing the different enterprises meet with the members of the General Conference Committee, and prayerfully consider plans and ways and means for building up all branches of the work, then agree upon such plans for presenting the work as will show the people that it is a perfect unity, and that there is no rivalry, and raise money in such a way as that the building up on one enterprise will not tear down another.

Mother makes one important exception to the above plan. She says that whenever the Lord has plainly spoken regarding an important work that is being neglected, as in the case of the work among the Southern people, and then the General Conference continues to neglect it, that the workers connected with this missionary enterprise are free to go to the churches anywhere and everywhere, and raise means for the prosecution of the work that has been plainly pointed out should be done. So, she says, regarding the school work, if the General Conference Committee should refuse to co-operate in an effort to relieve the indebtedness of our schools, it would be right for the school then to go into the field, and appeal to churches and individuals. But we have no reason to believe that there will be any necessity for independent action. We believe that the members of the General Conference Committee stand just where Mother has stood for some time, waiting for the school boards to place their work on a sound basis, feeling that this is necessary before we can hope for the blessing of God, without which our efforts will be of no avail. *Spalding-Magan*, 156.

Elder White thus made the following points on behalf of his mother:

1. That the medical, educational and publishing work must work together without rivalry and with consultation, where appropriate, with church administrators. All arms of the church should demonstrate a unity of purpose.
2. If the church organization neglects a work *which God has plainly stated should be carried forward*, the workers are free to raise funds from the church members for the prosecution of the divinely appointed work. This is not a license for men to thrust into endeavors of their own devising. Godly wisdom dictates that the counsels of the Lord be sought before taking up any work for God.
3. Sister White at that time believed that the General Conference leadership would do right in these matters.
4. The institutions to be supported should themselves demonstrate fiscal responsibility in contributing means to their project and using God's means with care.

On June 28, 1901, Sister White wrote a letter to the newly elected president of the General Conference, Elder A. G. Daniells. Its contents are pregnant with instruction for us today. Readers would do well to ponder this letter in its entirety. Portions are reproduced below.

Pharisaism in the Christian world today is not extinct. The Lord desires to break up the course of precision which has become so firmly established, which has hindered instead of advancing His work. He desires His people to remember that there is a large space over which the light of present truth is to be shed. Divine wisdom must have abundant room in which to work. It is to advance without asking permission or support from those who have taken to themselves a kingly power. In the past one set of men have tried to keep in their own hands the control of all the means coming from the churches, and have used this means in a most disproportionate manner, erecting expensive buildings where such large buildings were unnecessary and uncalled for, and leaving needy places without help or encouragement. . . .

For years the same routine, the same “regular way” of working has been followed, and God’s work has been greatly hindered. The narrow plans that have been followed by those who did not have clear, sanctified judgment has resulted in a showing that is not approved by God.

God calls for a revival and a reformation. The “regular lines” have not done the work which God desires to see accomplished. Let revival [and] reformation make constant changes. . . . Let every yoke be broken. Let men awaken to the realization that they have an individual responsibility.

The present showing is sufficient to prove to all who have the true missionary spirit that the “regular lines” may prove a failure and a snare. God helping His people, the circle of kings who dared to take such great responsibilities should never again exercise their unsanctified power in the so-called “regular lines.” Too much power has been invested in unrevived, unreformed human agencies. Let not selfishness and covetousness be allowed to outline the work which must be done to fulfill the grand, noble commission which Christ has given to every disciple. . . .

The Lord has encouraged those who have started out on their own responsibility to work for Him, their hearts filled with love for souls ready to perish. . . . Young men, go forth into the places to which you are directed by the Spirit of the Lord. Work with your hands, that you may be self-supporting, and as you have opportunity, proclaim the message of warning. . . . God grant that the voices which have been so quickly raised to say that all the money invested in the work must go through the appointed channel at Battle Creek, shall not be heard. The people to whom God has given His means are amenable to Him alone. It is their privilege to give direct aid and assistance to missions. . . .

I do not consider it the duty of the Southern branch of our work, in the publication and handling of books, to be under the dictation of our established publishing houses. And if means can be devised to reduce the expense of publishing and circulating books, let this be done. Letter to Brother Daniells, June 28, 1901, published in *Spalding-Magan*. 174–7.

Now notice some of the instruction given by the servant of the Lord in the above letter.

1. God's workers must not await assistance or support from administrators who have usurped kingly power, before they go forth to do the Lord's bidding.
2. Sister White condemns those who seek to keep all God's means under their own control.
3. The "regular way" of doing God's work has at times hindered the work. The "regular lines" had not undertaken the work God required and God mandated that a reformation take place.
4. The present work of the "regular lines" (the church organization) had often been a failure and a snare because too much power was in unsanctified hands.
5. God commissioned young men to work with their hands and go forward in self-supporting work.
6. That all God's means pass through a single channel is contrary to God's expressed plan.
7. Those church members who return means to God are individually responsible to invest the means personally under God's direction.
8. Self-supporting publications need not be under the control of the organization.

Two months earlier, in April 1901, Sister White had spoken in the Battle Creek Library. In part she stated,

In reference to our conference, it is repeated o'er and o'er again, that it is the voice of God and therefore everything must be referred to the conference and have the conference voice in regard to permission or restriction on what shall be and what shall not be done in the various fields. . . .

We have heard enough, abundance, about that "everything must go around in the regular way." When we see the regular lines are altered and purified and refined, and the God of the heavens' mold is upon the regular lines, then it is our business to establish the regular lines. But when we see message after message that God has given has been accepted, but no change, just the same as it was before, then it is evident that new blood must be brought into the regular lines. . . .

It requires minds that are worked by the Holy Spirit of God, and unless that evidence is given, unless there is a power that shows that they are accepted by God to impart to the responsibilities that have to be handled, then there should be a renovation without any delay. To have this conference pass on and close up as the conferences have done, with the same manipulating, with the very same tone, and the same order—God forbid! . . . God forbid, brethren. . . . He wants every living soul that has a knowledge of the truth to come to their senses. He wants every living power to arouse, and we are just about the same thing as dead men. And it is time that we should arise and shine because our light has come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon us, and until this shall come we might just as well close up the conference today as any other day. . . .

Now the Lord wants His Spirit to come in. He wants the Holy Ghost king. He wants everything of the sharpness, that it shall not be exercised toward outsiders, it shall not be exercised toward one that is trying to serve God and trying to exercise all his power to serve Him, that is bringing his tithes here to sustain the ministry. He has a treasury, and that treasury is to be sustained by the tithe, and that tithe is to be so liberal that it will sustain the work largely: each one to act in their capacity in such a way that the confidence of the whole people will be established in them, and that they will not be afraid, but see everything just as light as day until they are in connection with the work of God and the people. . . .

There is to be no man that has the right to put his hand out and say, No, you can not go there; we won't support you if you go there. Why, what have you to do with supporting? Did they create the means? The means come from the people, and those who are in destitute fields. The voice of God has told me to instruct them to go to the people and to tell them their necessities, and to draw all the people to work just where they can find a place to work, to build up the work in every place they can.

Remarks at a meeting held in Battle Creek College Library, General Conference, April 1901, *Spalding-Magan* 162–8.

Now notice that Sister White here stated that the “voice of God” had instructed her to tell the people to “work just where they can find a place to work.” Thus God’s approved channels are not to

are not to be found exclusively in the organized work. And God's people are to be informed of the necessities wherever God's work is faithfully undertaken. Further, Sister White emphasizes that the means that come from the people. The leaders are not to treat means as if these means belong to them.

5

The Appointed Channels Part II

SISTER WHITE wrote emphatically against church administrators seeking to control the expenditure of the means which church members had in their hearts to give for the undertaking of the work of God. She pointed out that each of us is a steward of God's means and we must not abrogate that responsibility to the Conference. Today many blindly believe that if they give their tithes and offerings to the organization they can then wash their hands of all further responsibility. Such a view lacks divine support. We are responsible for the way God's means that we give are utilized.

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 of 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 the 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 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, and 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 course of 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.

. . . As God's hired servants we are not to bargain away our stewardship; but that before the heavenly universe we are to administer the truth committed to us by God. Our own hearts are to be sanctified, our hands are to have something to impart as occasion demands, of the income that God entrusts to us. Ellen White in *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*, Series A, p. 185, Mimeographed Edition. Manuscript Release Number 1200.

The above counsel is confirmed below.

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? Where has been heard throughout the churches the prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit? Dissatisfied and disheartened, we turn away from the scene.

The Kress Collection, 120.

How we would desire that each reader could join us on our missionary tours to Austria, Colombia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Guinea, Romania, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe and other like nations. There they would see the meaning of

God's counsels. We are absolutely astounded as we view the mighty work accomplished by self-supporting ministries with small budgets. Truth-filled literature, for which God's people in mission fields have been starved, has been scattered by the tens of millions, training schools established, extension schools presented, evangelistic meetings proclaiming the three angels' messages undertaken, health work accomplished, Spirit of Prophecy books translated into significant languages and many other God-fearing activities are being undertaken and the work is expanding. While the denominational organization largely finds itself caught in a bureaucratic web which consumes enormous amounts of the means of God's treasury, God is increasingly utilizing the cost-effective arm of self-supporting ministries to complete His work on earth, just as He foretold. Further, in general, self-supporting ministries today tend to be far more dedicated to following divine counsels than the organized arm of God's church. There is a zeal and earnestness in self-supporting lines that has largely abated in the organized arm of the church where authority and rulership have often replaced humility and service.

Thus, should not a portion of God's means be devoted to those who are performing the very work which He has commissioned and which is undertaken in the manner He has designed? We need not trust our own fallible judgments in answering the question posed, for as we have seen, divine counsel has accorded us with an answer in the affirmative. God's children must prayerfully consider the wise stewardship of the means entrusted to them. It has never been safe to do otherwise. That stewardship denotes a responsibility for the final proclamation of the everlasting gospel. It is a counterfeit stewardship which appropriates God's means for the preaching of apostasy, the promotion of low Christian standards, the pursuing of lawsuits against our brethren, the conducting of blasphemous worship services and entertainment posing as worship and the fostering of ecumenical ties. To continue to follow such a policy of stewardship is to defy divine counsels.

On January 6, 1908, Sister White made a stirring appeal for God's workers to go forward untrammelled by improper organizational restrictions. Those who do so are serving God in approved channels. They merit our financial support.

God has given me a message for the men who are carrying large responsibilities in Washington and other centers of the work. This is a time when the work of God should be conducted with the greatest wisdom, unselfishness, and the strictest integrity by every conference; a time when there should be the closest observance of the law of God on the part of every worker; a walking and working under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God needs men and women who will work in the simplicity of Christ to bring the knowledge of truth before those who need its converting power. But when a precise line is laid down which the workers must follow in their efforts to proclaim the message, a limit is set to the usefulness of a great number of workers. I am charged to speak, saying, God seeth not as man seeth. Those who occupy responsible positions need to place a lower estimate upon the value of human wisdom and to esteem more highly the sanctification of the Spirit revealed in the lowliness and gentleness of Christ. They need to have the Holy Spirit come into their hearts and minds, to control their wills and to sanctify their tongues. When soul and mind and body are converted to God, our physical strength and our desires will become working agencies for God. When the converting power of God transforms the life, we shall be educated by God Himself to speak His words and work His works.

I have said only a little in comparison with what must be said on this subject. But I call on our ministers, our teachers, and our physicians to awake out of sleep, and see the opportunities for work that are within their reach, but which for years have been allowed to pass unimproved. . . .

It is a sin for any to criticize and find fault with those who in their manner of working do not exactly meet their minds. . . . In the place of complaining at your brother's work, take up your own neglected work. Instead of picking flaws in your brother's character, search your own heart, confess your sins, and act honestly with God. Let there be condemnation of self for the work that lies undone all about you. Instead of placing impediments in the way of those who are trying to accomplish something . . . let our eyes be opened to see that time is passing, and that there is much for us to do.

The Lord works through various agencies. If there are those

who desire to step into new fields and take up new lines of labor, encourage them to do so. . . . Let no man's hand be raised to hinder his brother. Those who have had experience in the work of God should be encouraged to follow the guidance and counsel of the Lord.

Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in the 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. 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.

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 forbidding. The work of God is not to be thus trammelled. 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 brethren, and will give them credit for having love for souls and a desire to labor unselfishly to promote the interests of the cause. . . .

You have no time to lose. Satan will soon rise up to create hindrances; let the work go forward while it may. This is no time for weakness to be woven into our experience. Do not spend your money for unnecessary things, do not waste it on story magazines and cheap literature; but take your surplus means and say, I will use this in employing men and women to give the last message of warning to the world.

When the Holy Spirit is allowed to mold our hearts and lives, there will be much more confidence expressed in the workers who are struggling with difficulties in hard places. Let every one take his own individual case before the Lord, and study his own faults instead of the fancied shortcomings of his brother. We each need to realize our own weakness and be constantly on guard. Satan is watching to take us unawares, and many are ignorant of their own defects of character.

The Lord is calling for men and women to guard their own houses and families, and instead of watching their fellow workers, regarding with jealousy their outgoing and incoming, to turn their attention to self. The Lord has a report to make of every soul who would restrict the liberty of another. There is a Watcher who is taking the measure of character, and who will judge accordingly. The jealousy revealed by some who claim to be in the truth, plainly reveals that unless their hearts are changed they will never be overcomers. Unless they respond to the subduing, sanctifying influences of the grace of God, they will never wear the crown of life.

Those who desire to wear Christ's yoke will heed the invitation "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." To all who would mark out a certain course for their brother to pursue, the Lord says, "Stand out of the way." Satan and his emissaries are doing enough of this kind of work. We are altogether too near the close of earth's history to seek to block the wheels of the chariot of truth. God's workers are to come into line, to pray together, to counsel together. And whenever it is impossible for them to gather for counsel, God will instruct through His Spirit those who sincerely desire to serve him. (*Spaulding and Magan Collection.*, 419-24, emphasis added).

6

Tithes and Offerings – A Common Misconception

A STRANGE dichotomy of thinking has emerged in recent years within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The resultant reasoning asserts that the tithe is sacred unto the Lord and that sacredness demands that it be utilized only by and for denominational workers, whether they are preaching the gospel message or promoting apostasy or using the tithe for some other unsanctified purpose. On the other hand donations and free-will offerings are in some respect less sacred and thus may be utilized for either self-supporting, denominational, welfare or for other beneficent purposes.

Thus many self-supporting ministries, perhaps in order to retain membership in ASI (*Adventist Services and Industries*) and to receive the approval of the organized church, have bowed to denominational pressure and ceased their former practice of utilizing tithe for the financing of their work in spreading the gospel. As noted elsewhere, it seems that few, if indeed any, have felt it necessary to restore to denominational coffers the tithes they formerly utilized. If such ministries do possess a conviction that the Lord ordained that the tithe was designed by God for the sole use of the denomination, they have an obligation, not only to return the entire sum of tithe formerly utilized, but, in addition, to pay interest upon that sum. Further, if the denominational leaders possess an inspiration-based conviction on this matter, would it not be proper for them that they should require such restitution? That they have not done so is *prima facie* evidence that these leaders acknowledge that their position upon the doctrine of tithe is not based upon the words of inspiration and is merely an administrative requirement.

One or two self-supporting ministries have argued that they continue to believe that it is appropriate to accept tithe for their gospel oriented work, but they have chosen to cease the practice in order to maintain peace and harmony with church administrators. Such ministries thus have conceded to the demands of the organization, not out of conviction but as a matter of expediency. They have a strong desire to work peaceably with, and unhindered by, the church organization. Those taking this stand, while still convicted of the rightful use of the tithe by self-supporting workers, quite understandably and logically see no need to restore to the denomination the tithe they formerly accepted and used. We would, however, remind such ministries that only rarely is expediency a worthy goal. Conviction serves a better purpose.

Such, however, should not see it as their role to criticize their brethren in self-supporting ministry who practice that which inspiration supports in the matter of the use of the sacred tithe by faithful self-supporting ministries spreading the gospel message.

How valid is the view that the tithe is somehow more sacred than free-will offerings? Inspiration makes no such distinction. It would seem that this confusion has arisen because of two facts. The first of these is that the amount of free-will offerings is not designated by God, whereas God has fixed ten per cent of increase as the requirement for the tithe. And second is the fact that the use of tithe is restricted by divine direction for the support of the gospel ministers and the spread of the gospel commission alone, while offerings may be used for a much wider spectrum of noble and holy purposes. This has led some minds to lower the sacredness of free-will offerings. These understandings have led many to lose sight of the fact that free-will offerings are equally as sacred as the tithe in the eyes of God.

During the reign of King Hezekiah, a reformation swept through Judah and faithful stewardship in the matter of tithes and offerings followed. Azariah, the High Priest, was delighted and expressed his joy to the king.

And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.

2 Chronicles 31:10.

This encouraged King Hezekiah to act.

Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord; and they prepared them, and brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully; over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next. 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12.

It will be observed that *both* tithes and offerings were here included among the “dedicated things.” Both were holy unto the Lord and no distinction was made in the level of this holiness. This is ever the testimony of inspiration.

Further, when the Israelites conquered the heathen lands of Caanan they were instructed to specifically replace the evil practices of the pagans with the return of tithes and free-will offerings to the Lord. Both tithes and offerings were commanded to be brought to the place where God’s name was and which He described as “His *habitation*.” No distinction is thus made in the sacredness of the tithes and free-will offerings.

But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks. Deuteronomy 12:5, 6.

In the days of the restoration of Judah, following the Babylonian captivity, the Jews were required to meet the same obligations concerning their tithes and offerings.

And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. Nehemiah 10:37.

Once again no distinction was made concerning the sanctity of the tithes and offerings.

Sister White’s frequent use of the term “means” to describe either tithes or offerings or both, confirms the Biblical prece-

dence in designating no distinction in the level of sacredness between the tithes and free-will offering dedicated to the Lord.

Thus it is quite illogical, indeed inappropriate, to fashion a humanly-designed distinction. Either faithful self-supporting work is an appropriately designated recipient of *both* tithes, if appropriately used, and free-will offerings or it is inappropriate for such ministries to accept either, and all funding for such must come solely from the earnings of the workers in the ministry. Since the latter suggestion defies the direct words of Scripture and New Testament practice, it cannot be validly supported.

As we will set forth later in this book (See chapter 9), some dispute the evident fact that Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 11:8 and Philippians 4:15, 16 refer to tithe (as in the first mentioned passage) and likely to both in the remaining two passages. But in view of the fact that Paul was a self-supporting worker he had a right to receive both tithes and offerings or he had no right to either. That he records a number of times when he received and accepted financial support provides Scriptural evidence that the work of self-supporting gospel workers may be appropriately funded from the treasury of the Lord.

When the unscriptural distinction that is frequently made between the level of sacredness between tithes and offerings is discarded, then much of the beclouded thinking of God's people concerning this issue dissipates.

In the last message of warning to the world, God "will work through humble instruments." These individuals "will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions." (*Great Controversy*, 606) If these men and women are God's designated agents to spread the last gospel message, God's most impelling message of love, as inspiration testifies that they are, then it is time to question whether it is more appropriate for ministers on the payroll of a Conference who recoil from preaching that message and rather promote the doctrinal errors of the fallen churches of Babylon, to receive such sacred means. Each of us must evaluate the evidence of inspiration and personally decide this issue.

7

Financing Self-Supporting Ministries

JUST AS the early Christian workers were self-supporting workers, so too were the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. Most of us have heard of the hay field that James White cut by hand so that he and his wife could find sufficient funds to travel to speaking appointments. We also hear of his work on the railroad for a similar purpose. Thus God chose to commence His work with self-supporting workers. As in most denominations, self-supporting work preceded denominational work. But by 1861, God had ordained denominational work, not to take the place of self-supporting work, but to add strength to the work of God. The first conference to be established in that year was the Michigan Conference.

The purpose of establishing state conferences was primarily twofold. It was recognized that little churches were lights that radiated the witness of truth a certain distance from their location, but that they were not in a position to expand the work in other unentered areas of the state so easily. Thus it was thought wise to have men of experience in charge of the work for the state, to find colporteurs, evangelists, Bible workers, and laity who could be sent into *unentered territory*, there to spread the light of the third angel's message. Second, it was thought wise to have men of experience who could counsel and give guidance in truth to the various church fellowships in the state. It was never in the purposes of God that conferences should *rule or control* the churches. They were to be the servant to the local churches. Thus commenced the denominational work where men were chosen and ordained as ministers and began to be paid a small regular salary.

J. N. Loughborough confirmed this.

It is expected that the officers of the church will deem it a privilege to have *counsel* and *help* of any evangelist or minister, who may visit them, and not look upon them infringing on their rights.

J. N. Loughborough,
The Church, Its Organization, Order & Discipline, Review & Herald, 1907, p.172, emphasis added.

Sister White also confirmed this by insisting that organization was necessary,

To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying on the work in new fields. . . .

Ibid., 92-3.

Sister White added some other needs, that would be helped by denominational organization:

. . . for protecting both the church and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for other objects, organization was indispensable.

Ibid.

There were a number of reasons for the formation of the General Conference in 1863, including some problems related to the Civil War in America. One clear vision that God gave to the brethren was that even though they had state conferences, this could not systematically forward the work in the states or territories where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence at all. The General Conference was to be a body that would plan and develop the work in *new and unentered territories*. Of course later this was to extend to overseas fields as well.

By the turn of the century, the self-supporting nature of Seventh-day Adventist beginnings was all but forgotten, though there continued to be faithful self-supporting workers. But serious problems were arising in God's remnant church. There were doctrinal problems, spearheaded by John Harvey Kellogg's pantheism, that were splitting the Church. There were problems in the health work too, as Dr. Kellogg refused to accept God's counsel condemning the building of a huge monument to his own genius in Battle Creek, rather than guiding God's people to open many smaller sanitariums in the country areas just outside the cities.

The educational work was floundering. As early as 1879, the

servant of the Lord was expressing concern about Battle Creek College.

There is danger that our college will be turned away from its original design. God's purpose has been made known, that our people should have an opportunity to study the sciences and at the same time to learn the requirements of His word. Biblical lectures should be given; the study of the Scriptures should have the first place in our system of education.

Students are sent from a great distance to attend the college at Battle Creek for the very purpose of receiving instruction from the lectures on Bible subjects. But for one or two years past there has been an effort to mold our school after other colleges. When this is done, we can give no encouragement to parents to send their children to Battle Creek College. The moral and religious influences should not be put in the background

5T 21.

Too little attention has been given to the education of young men for the ministry. This was the primary object to be secured in the establishment of the college. In no case should this be ignored or regarded as a matter of secondary importance. . .

Our college is designed of God to meet the advancing wants for this time of peril and demoralization. The study of books only cannot give students the discipline they need. A broader foundation must be laid. . . .

It would be well could there be connected with our college, land for cultivation and also workshops under the charge of men competent to instruct the students in the various departments of physical labor. Much is lost by a neglect to unite physical with mental taxation.

Ibid., 22-3.

Our school was established, not merely to teach the sciences, but for the purpose of giving instruction in the great principles of God's word and in the practical duties of everyday life.

Ibid., 25.

But sadly things did not improve significantly when the college was moved to Berrien Springs. In spite of the fact that two deeply committed Christian educators, E.A. Sutherland and Percy Magan, had been chosen to lead that institution, there was persistent

opposition to the reforms by some of the board members and leaders of the church. The opposition of Sutherland and Magan to Elder Daniells' reorganization plan at the 1903 General Conference session may not have helped them. Three years after the establishment of Emmanuel Missionary College, Sutherland and Magan resigned their respective leadership roles as President and Dean of the College.

The servant of the Lord encouraged them to enter self-supporting work as she led them to the South where she and they, under God's direction, established the first modern self-supporting institution. Thus, to a significant degree, the self-supporting arm of the church was restored to its proper place. As they traveled on the Morning Star up the Cumberland River, the servant of the Lord indicated that in a vision she had seen the property that they were to purchase.

When Sutherland and Magan saw the property at Madison, they were greatly discouraged. It was a pig farm covered with many rocks. In every way, it appeared to be an unpromising property. When the owner adamantly refused to sell it to them because they were from the North, the two men were relieved. However, Sister White knew that God had chosen this property, and directed the men to return. Eventually, the woman sold the property. The stones proved to be a blessing as many of them were used in the buildings that were subsequently erected.

So convinced was the servant of the Lord that Madison College was of God, she accepted the responsibility of membership of the board, the only such position that she ever accepted. Denominational leadership seemed uncomfortable with the fact that Sister White was so closely linked to the school. The new self-supporting institution was seen as a challenge to denominational leadership's authority and control. Many were unconvinced of Madison College's role in the mission of the church in spite of Sister White's repeated counsel supporting it. They were concerned about the freedom that the brethren in Madison had to conduct their ministry without restrictions, and their freedom to avoid the bureaucratic "red tape" and protocol that had been developing in denominational lines. There was also the problem of accepting and even soliciting means from Seventh-day Adventists which denominational leadership felt should go only to those

who were under direct denominational *control*.

The servant of the Lord became the defense of Sutherland and Magan. She wrote many letters on behalf of this self-supporting institution. It took years before her counsels were received at all, and reluctant cooperation of the denominational leaders obtained. Dr. Percy Magan, who for the first ten years was the Dean of Madison College, and who later became Dean and President of the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University), kept a diary during this period of time. Excerpts from this diary provide a vivid account of the battle that ensued. Of course we must always keep in mind that these are Dr. Magan's reflections, not necessarily the exact words of Sister White and other leaders quoted.

August 8, 1904—Worked with W. C. W. [Pastor Willie C. White, Sister White's son] during the forenoon getting article of plans ready re incorporating school at Nashville. In afternoon met Daniells, Prescott, Griggs, Washburn, Baird, W. C. White to consider our plan of organization. Daniells didn't like it. Prescott thought we weren't fit to guide youth. Baird referred unfavorably to our previous work in the South. Griggs wouldn't lend his influence on account of one study plan. Prescott thought we had too much land. Washburn thought public confession in R & H or elsewhere would be good. Prescott thought we travelled too much. So did Daniells. Baird thought other teachers would envy our independence and would want to do likewise. We would boss the Southern Union Conference instead of S. U. C. bossing us. Why can't we "loan" our money? I told them they only believed Testimonies which suited them and that their whole attitude was unfavorable. Interview lasted from 3:00 to 8:30 P. M.

August 9, 1904—Talked with Mrs. E. G. and W. C. White re our plan for organization. She said we were not to go under the domination of the Southern Union Conference and seemed to have no objection to our general plan.

Had a long talk with Daniells. He was a little more social. Told again all his woes with J. H. K. [Dr. John Harvey Kellogg]. I didn't say much.

April 14, 1906—Washington. Breakfasted with Elder and Mrs. Irwin [former General Conference President]. Took car to

Takoma Park, and spent forenoon with Daniells. Had a very satisfactory conversation. Told him why our school was independent and would have to eat shewbread.

Tait saw me off on train. He said Daniells read Testimony re. E. A. S. [Dr. Sutherland] and self not being treated right at meeting at Takoma Park that afternoon.

May 7, 1907—Paradise Valley. Talked to Sr. White re attitude of Gen. Conf. towards us. Miss Sara McEnterfer and Lillian present. Told Sr. W. [White] that the administration held we had no right to go get money unless we were owned by the Conf. She replied, "You are doing double what they are. Take all the donations you can get. The money belongs to the Lord and not to these men. The position they take is not of God. The Southern Union Conference is not to own or control you. You cannot turn things over to them."

May 14, 1907—Loma Linda. Took Wellesley and Shaen to see Sr. White. She talked real kindly to them. Told them of the interest she had in them and had always had in their father. Told them to be good boys and grow up missionaries.

I talked to her about the General Conference position that concerns non-conference owned institutions should have no money. She answered— "Fiddlesticks, a pack of fools ought to know better than that. Daniells and those with him have taken a position on this matter that is not of God." Said she had something written on this and would try to find it.

May 16–24, 1907—Spent the forenoon (May 23) with W. C. White. Told him how Elder Evans had sent \$300 as a gift from General Conference, that in reality had held up pledges sent in from Alberta. Told him how I could not trust Daniells. He gave me Sr. White's letters to Daniells re us. He told me he did not agree with the Administration at Washington in insisting that all monies pass through their hands. Told how Daniells and Irwin accused him of "softening" and holding back the Testimonies. Said that he would not agree to our going under conf. domination.

Lest it be thought that Magan may have misrepresented the counsel of Sister White, consider these quotes from the booklet *The Madison School, Special Testimonies, Series B, #11*. All of these quotations are from Sister White's letters. Keep in mind they do

not address the tithe issue.

p. 3—It is impossible to make the Madison school what it should be, unless it is given a liberal share in the *means* that shall be appropriated for the work in the South. (emphasis added).

p. 4—I was shown that there is danger of these schools being circumscribed in their plans and limited in their advantages. This should not be. Everything possible should be done to encourage the students who need the class of instruction that can be given at these schools, that they may go forth properly instructed to do a work for others who need the same education and training that they have received.

p. 17—I do not charge any one with an intention to do wrong, but from the light I have received, I can say that there is danger that some will criticize unjustly the work of our brethren and sisters connected with the school at Madison. Let every encouragement possible be given to those who are engaged in an effort to give children and youth an education in the knowledge of God and of His law.

p. 19—It has been presented to me that before this, our people should have provided this school with *means*, and thus placed it on vantage ground. (Emphasis added.)

p. 20—You have a work to do to encourage the school work in Madison, Tennessee.

p. 21—You may ask, What is needed? I answer, It is encouragement. Brethren Sutherland and Magan have had a severe lesson in the past. The Lord sent them correction and instruction, and they received the message from the Lord, and made confession. . . .

Means should be appropriated to the needs of the work in Madison, that the labors of the teachers may not be so hard in the future. (Emphasis added.)

p. 22—At the present time, they should have five thousand dollars to enable them to provide suitable facilities for the work, and still more should be provided, in order that a small sanitarium may be connected with the school.

p. 23—I appeal to the brethren in ---- to help in this emer-

gency, and make a liberal gift to the Madison school, that they may erect a chapel and school building.

The Madison training-school for teachers should have the hearty support of God's people. Therefore, I ask you and your associates on the *conference committee to act liberally* in helping our brethren in Madison in this important work. (Emphasis added.)

p. 24—I would say to our brethren in the Southern field. Let there be *no restriction* laid on the Madison school to limit its work in the field of its operation. If Brethren Sutherland and Magan have promised not to draw students to their school from the Southern States, they should be freed from any such restriction. Such a promise should never have been asked or granted. I am instructed to say that there should be no restrictions limiting their freedom to draw students from the Southern field. (Emphasis added.)

p. 25—Those who have in charge the *disbursement of funds* coming to the Southern field, *should not fail to render proportionate aid to the Madison school.* (Emphasis added.)

p. 27—Oftentimes in the past the work which the Lord designed should prosper has been hindered because men have tried to place a yoke upon their fellow workers *who did not follow the methods which they supposed to be the best.* (Emphasis added.)

p. 28—God has revealed to me that we are in positive danger of bringing into our educational work the customs and fashions that prevail in the schools of the world. If teachers are not guarded in their work, they will place on the necks of their students worldly yokes instead of the yoke of Christ. The plan of the schools we shall establish in these closing years of the work is be of an entirely different order from those we have instituted in the past.

p. 29—I have been shown that in our educational work we are not to follow the methods that have been adopted in our older established schools.

p. 30—Before we can carry the message of present truth in all its fullness to other countries, we must first *break every yoke.* We must come into the line of true education, walking in the wisdom of God, and not in the wisdom of the world. God calls

for messengers who will be true reformers. We must educate, educate, to prepare a people who will understand the message, and then give the message to the world.

p. 31—These obstacles were not placed there by the Lord. In some things the finite planning and devisings of men have worked counter to the work of God.

Let us be careful, brethren, lest we counterwork and hinder the progress of others, and so delay the sending forth of the gospel message. This has been done, and this is why I am now compelled to speak so plainly.

p. 31–2—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. (Emphasis added.)

The lack of interest in this work by some who should have valued it highly is decidedly wrong. Our brethren must guard themselves against the repetition of such experiences.

The Lord does not require that the educational work at Madison shall be changed all about before it can receive the hearty support of our people. The work that has been done there is approved of God, and He forbids that this line of work shall be broken up. The Lord will continue to bless and sustain the workers so long as they follow His counsel.

p. 32—More must be done in their behalf by their brethren. The Lord's money is to sustain them in their labors. They have a right to share the *means* given to the cause. They should be given a proportionate share of the means that comes in for the furtherance of the cause. (Emphasis added.)

p. 34—If many more in other schools were receiving a similar training, we as a people would be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The message would be quickly carried to every country, and souls now in darkness would be brought to the light.

It would have been pleasing to God if, while the Madison

school has been doing its work, other such schools had been established in different parts of the Southern field.

p. 35—Every possible means should be devised to establish schools of the Madison order in various parts of the South; and those who lend their *means* and their influence to help this work, are aiding the cause of God. I am instructed to say to those who have means to spare: Help the work at Madison. (Emphasis added.)

p. 36—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 the people whom the Lord impresses to help. They should have *means*—God's *means*—with which to work. . . . 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. (Emphasis added.)

p. 37—Now the time has come when these *faithful workers should receive from their brethren*, the Lord's stewards, the *means* that they need to carry on successfully the work of the Madison school and the little Madison sanitarium. (emphasis added)

Also on p. 37—As the Lord's messenger, I ask you to help the Madison school now. This is its time of need. The money which you possess is the Lord's entrusted capital. It should be held in readiness to answer the calls in places where the Lord has need of it.

There was the strongest support from the servant of the Lord for this model self-supporting institution. Madison became a model for subsequent self-supporting institutions. It is not difficult to understand why many Conference leaders find it very difficult to comprehend the purpose of self-supporting institutions, and it is also easy to see why such institutions are seen as a threat. First, self-supporting institutions and ministries are not under the control of denominational units. Second, they are often seen as rivals for the financial resources of God's people. But God is concerned with forwarding His work and hastening the coming of Jesus. If our own people are inspired with the truth and not discouraged by apostasy and dominating control, there will be

sufficient funds for all in God's work. We are fully persuaded that if our laity were inspired with the powerful messages of salvation and hope from the Scriptures, the channels of both the conference and self-supporting units of God's work would have all the funds that they need. Below are some conclusions drawn from the above communications of Sister White.

1. *Sister White objected to every kind of human restriction* placed upon those conducting God's work. Indeed, she not only reprov'd the leaders of the Southern Union for placing restrictions upon these men, forbidding them to solicit students from the Southern Union, but she also reprov'd Sutherland and Magan for accepting such a restriction. There is divine counsel and great wisdom in workers counselling together but never is there safety in one human being controlling another fellow worker.
2. Sister White counselled something that is extraordinarily difficult for any Conference organization to accept. The Southern Union was to provide a proportionate amount of funds to the self-supporting Madison school from its own treasury while yet Madison school was to be free from any control by the Southern Union. This principle surely would apply to other faithful self-supporting units.
3. Note the many times in the booklet, *The Madison School*, that Sister White urges that means be provided from the denominational work for the support of self-supporting work.
4. There is little doubt that the funds God directed to be provided from the conferences to self-supporting work included both tithes and offerings. Tithe is the greatest source of conference revenues. Scores of times, though not always, Sister White uses the term 'means' either exclusively to refer to tithe or to include tithe.

Here are a few examples:

There are a large number of names on our church books, and if all would be prompt in paying an honest *tithe* to the Lord, which is His portion, the treasury would not lack for *means*.

Counsels on Stewardship, 95, emphasis added.

Of the *means* which is entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—a *tithe*. 5T 149, emphasis added.

God has given special direction as to the use of the *tithe*. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of *means*. *Gospel Workers*, 224, emphasis added.

Should *means* flow into the treasury exactly according to God's plan—a *tenth* of all the increase, there would be abundance to carry forward His work. *Evangelism*, 252, emphasis added.

And in view of this the Lord commands us, "Bring ye all the *tithes* into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house," that is, a surplus of *means* in the treasury.

Review and Herald, vol. 2, p. 18, emphasis added.

If all of our people paid a faithful *tithe*, there would be more *means* in the treasury. *Ibid.* vol. 4, 507, emphasis added.

With an increase of numbers would have come an increase of *tithe*, providing *means* to carry the message to other places.

Pamphlet No. 67, p. 9, emphasis added.

If all, both rich and poor, would bring their *tithes* into the storehouse, there would be a sufficient supply of *means*.

4T, 475, emphasis added.

It is of concern to the authors that many conference administrators are eager to accuse faithful self-supporting ministries of misusing God's *tithe* while ignoring their failure to follow plain, divine counsel calling upon them to provide proportionate *means* to support God's ordained self-supporting work. Is there not also an even greater need to reexamine the areas where *tithe* is being misused?

Perhaps just here it would be well to examine just which uses of *tithe* are appropriate. Ellen White is clear in her statements regarding who should be supported from the *tithe*:

Ministers and Evangelists:

Instruction has been given me that there is a withholding of the *tithe* that should be faithfully brought into the Lord's treasury, for the support of the ministers and missionaries who are opening the Scriptures to the people, and working from house to house. . . . The ministers and evangelists who are laboring in

the Lord's vineyard, must be supported.

-RH April 20, 1905.

Bible Teachers and Bible Workers

Our conferences should see that the schools are provided with teachers who are thorough Bible teachers and who have a deep Christian experience. The best ministerial talent should be brought into schools, and the salaries of these teachers should be paid from the tithe.

-1MR 189.

Medical Missionaries

Some . . . 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 effective worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete.

-MM 245.

The spread of literature

But while some go forth to preach He calls upon others to answer to His claims upon them for tithes and offerings with which to support the ministry and to spread the printed truth all over the land.

-4T 472.

8

Tithes and Offerings: A Biblical Perspective

LIKE SO MANY others, we have been inclined in the past to limit our study upon the tithing/offering questions primarily to the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Recently our attention was drawn to M. E. Kellogg's (Do not confuse M. E. Kellogg with Dr. John Harvey Kellogg) book, *The Supremacy of Peter*, (Review & Herald Publishing Association: 1898). One chapter, entitled "New Testament Church Government," addressed differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching on authority. In this chapter Kellogg pointed out that the model of the New Testament Church could not sustain the Roman Catholic concept of an exclusive central storehouse. Rather, Kellogg showed that the New Testament church, while accepting that there was a central storehouse in Jerusalem, also demonstrated Biblical approval for returning funds directly to self-supporting ministers.

The church at Philippi at one time took upon itself the task of supporting the apostle Paul, sending to him by a special messenger money or other means when he was in distant lands. Phil. 4:15. No doubt other churches did the same. These are specimens of apostolic practice before the rigid rules of a hierarchy had crushed all the spontaneous life and liberty out of the church.

These are examples of apostolic practice; and the nearer any church can come to the system which existed in the primitive church, in principle, if not in all the minutia, the more certain it will be that it is in harmony with the divine mind. We do not mean to claim that there was not a systematic and regular way of supporting the gospel ministry, but we simply maintain that there was also opportunity, when necessary, for separate and

independent church and individual work of this character. (Kellogg M.E., *The Supremacy of Peter*, Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1898, pp. 269, 270)

This insight opened up a new vista of study for us, which we have explored with much interest, especially in the light of the controversy over tithe in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. The New Testament principles discovered by Kellogg are in no wise contrary to the system of organization established under the guidance of the Lord, but they provide an appropriate avenue for support for those called of God into self-supporting work.

Old Testament History of Tithe

The central basis for Seventh-day Adventist belief concerning tithe comes from the prophet Malachi.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3:8-10.

This counsel involves both tithes and offerings. Malachi made this statement in the context of the judgments and the blessings of God. In the light of this statement it would seem rather illogical to permit self-supporting ministries the right to receive offerings while denying them the right to receive tithes. Either faithful ministries may receive tithes and offerings or they have the right to receive neither. There was nothing new about this counsel. The principles were embedded in the laws of Moses; indeed, the principle of tithing goes back long before the time of Moses, at least to the experience of Abraham when he returned tithes to Melchizedek, King of Salem.

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. Genesis 14:20.

Of this event Paul was later to say,

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the

patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. Hebrews 7:4.

That Abraham's act was not isolated is indicated by Jacob's covenant to tithe all that he would receive.

And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Genesis 28:22.

It thus cannot be sustained that tithing was a part of the ceremonial laws of Moses which were "nailed to the cross." While the principle is first mentioned in relationship to Abraham, it almost certainly predated his time. It is therefore surprising that it was not until 1878 that the tithing principle was clearly defined, eventually replacing the concept of systematic benevolence that had been practiced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to that time.

Returning a faithful tithe is recognition that all we have belongs to God. Nothing, really, is ours by right. We are merely God's stewards of what He has entrusted to us, whether it be much or little. But man's responsibility is not limited to the tithe. The return of tithe also is a recognition that we desire to support the spread of the gospel on earth. We also have an even greater privilege, and that is to extend his gratitude to God by sacrificial, free-will offerings. It is in offerings, that man most clearly demonstrates his *love* for God. One matter is certain, both tithes and offerings are sacred to the Lord. Tithes have been ordained for a special purpose—the support of the Lord's full-time ministry and evangelistic outreach. Offerings have a much wider purpose which includes such objects as building and repairing church and school buildings, purchasing furniture, equipment and supplies, help to the poor, and a host of other special projects.

Because of their loyalty to God during the pagan rebellion of most of the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, God ordained the tribe of Levi as His priestly tribe. Not receiving an apportioned inheritance in Canaan, they were to be wholly supported by tithe returned from the members of the other tribes.

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.

Numbers 18:21.

But the Levites themselves also had to acknowledge the ownership of God by returning their own personal tithe to Him as well.

Thus 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 tenth part of the tithe.

Numbers 18:26.

Through selfishness and waywardness, Israel and Judah frequently became neglectful of tithing. Nehemiah in his day redressed such a situation.

And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.

Nehemiah 13:10–12.

Likewise, it is of necessity today that pastors and elders lay before God's people the holy obligation of returning to the Lord a faithful tithe and sacrificial offerings. For a minister or an elder to neglect such a responsibility is a dereliction of duty, for those who are negligent in these areas are guilty of robbery against God. The servant of the Lord has indicated that if God's people would return a faithful tithe and sacrificial offerings there would be sufficient funds for all the ministry that God has called this church to fulfill.

What was Malachi referring to when he spoke of the storehouse? Did his counseling infer that, in today's setting, it means the denominational treasury, or the conference alone, usually through the local church? Sister White says there are only two storehouses, that of Christ and that of Satan.

There are only two places in the universe where we can place 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.

Counsels on Stewardship, 35; 6T 448.

Others believe that wherever the gospel is preached by God's ministers is the storehouse. Of course there is not a single loca-

tion in the world that is the storehouse. Even in denominational practice every conference is a channel for tithe, as are every Union and the General Conference office. In Nehemiah's day there were a number of channels.

Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine
and the oil unto the treasuries. Nehemiah 13:12.

So today the channels of God are located around the world. This concept is true whether one limits the treasury to the conference work, or also includes the self-supporting work.

9

New Testament Principles of Tithing

WE MUST TURN to the New Testament to obtain our understanding of the tithing principle for the Christian church. One can only imagine the uncertainty that existed for some time in the emerging Christian Church concerning tithe. The indecision among the Jewish converts must have been great. Should they continue to return the tithe to the synagogues, or should it now be returned to the apostles and other leaders who were truly presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ? Surprisingly, the issue of tithe is rarely addressed in Scripture after the resurrection of Jesus. This doctrine is mainly limited to the writings of Paul, and it is from these writings that we must deduce the New Testament principle of tithing as it applies to us.

It is commonly accepted that Paul wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians during his eighteen month stay in Corinth—well before he had written his first letter to the Corinthians. It will be noted in the first letter to the Thessalonians that apparently, for the first time in his ministry, he refused to accept support either in kind or finances from these believers.

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. . . . For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:6, 9.

It is of great importance for us to understand why Paul made this difference in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a city of Macedonia. Immediately prior to preaching there Paul had shared the gospel in Philippi, a more easterly Macedonian city. But as it

will become clear later, he had no such reservations concerning a variety of support from the Philippians. Neither did he express such reservations concerning the cities of Asia Minor, such as Lydia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Ephesus, (though he did continue tent making there) Bithynia and other cities. There surely must have been a key reason why this self-supporting minister refused to accept tithes and offerings for his ministry in Thessalonica and Corinth while accepting them from other cities at the same time. The answer to this question affects our understanding today of the storehouse for tithes and offerings. Was the problem in Paul's mind that tithes and offerings should be returned only to the Jerusalem headquarters? Not at all, for Paul accepted support for his ministry from other Christians even while in Corinth.

I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. 2 Corinthians 11:8, 9.

Was the issue that the leaders in Jerusalem were opposed to him accepting financial support directly from the people? There is not one shred of evidence in Scripture to support such a conclusion. Was his concern that the rank and file members of the church opposed Paul's reception of financial support? Once again, such a conclusion lacks inspired support. A study of the Word itself clarifies the matter which led Paul to act differently in Thessalonica and Corinth from other places where he had labored.

The problem in both cities was the refusal of many of the believers to work in manual labor. The Greek pagans believed the soul was good and the body evil. Activities that involved physical labor, they believed, were for slaves alone, and were unfit for a free man. So extreme was Plato in this belief that he said that it was illiberal for a free man to study engineering. Aristotle, a little more open, said that it was appropriate for free men to study engineering theoretically, but that it was not appropriate to practice the skills of engineering. That was the kind of mind set that Paul was addressing. So he, a highly educated man,

a Roman citizen, and a free man, engaged in physical labor as a pertinent example to those who were bound by the pagan concepts of that day. It was for this reason that he refused to accept any support from these believers. He was determined not to be seen as a freeloader, as many of the new Christians were. Paul had previously made the whole issue clear in his second epistle to the Thessalonians.

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but *to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us*. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat*. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

2 Thessalonians 3:8–12, emphasis added.

Clearly the pagan concepts were also in Macedonia, and Paul, for one reason and one reason alone, refused to accept “wages” (tithe and offerings) so that he might work to set an example to the slothful people both in Thessalonica and Corinth. As is so often the case, Satan finds work for idle hands to do, and in this case, these people who were not engaged in worthwhile activities had become “busybodies.” Commenting upon this, the servant of the Lord captures the whole situation with clarity.

Among the Jews physical toil was not thought strange or degrading. Through Moses the Hebrews had been instructed to train their children to industrious habits, and it was regarded as a sin to allow the youth to grow up in ignorance of physical labor. Even though a child was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was thought essential. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Those parents who neglected to provide such a training for their children were looked upon as departing from the instruction of the Lord. In accordance with this custom, Paul had early learned the trade of tent making.

It is at Thessalonica that we first read of Paul's working with his hands in self-supporting labor while preaching the word.

Writing to the church of believers there, he reminded them that he “might have been burdensome” to them, and added: “Ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”

At Thessalonica Paul had met those who refused to work with their hands. . . . While laboring in Thessalonica, Paul had been careful to set before such ones a right example.

Acts of the Apostles, 346–8.

Paul no doubt had a burden for the souls of the slaves as well. Had they seen him living like the free man, they may well have concluded that his religion was a free man’s religion and not for them. Paul worked with his hands to demonstrate that God’s truth is for everyone, free and slave alike.

Sister White raises yet another issue which led to Paul’s decision to support himself partially by physical labor while ministering in Corinth and to reject tithes and offerings for himself from these people.

When Paul first visited Corinth, he found himself among a people who were suspicious of the motives of strangers. The Greeks on the seacoast were keen traders. So long had they trained themselves in sharp business practices, that they had come to believe that gain was godliness, and to make money, whether by fair means or foul, was commendable. Paul was acquainted with their characteristics, and he would give them no occasion for saying that he preached the gospel in order to enrich himself. He might justly have claimed support from his Corinthian hearers; but this right he was willing to forgo, lest his usefulness and success as a minister should be injured by the unjust suspicion that he was preaching the gospel for gain. He would seek to remove all occasion for misrepresentation, that the force of his message might not be lost.

Acts of the Apostles, 349.

Now with this inspired clarification we are able to address the statements of Paul to the Corinthians. Many, without Scriptural support, believe only Conference employed ministers may appropriately be supported by the tithe. Yet faithful self-supporting ministers, like faithful Conference ministers, are responding to God’s calling. Others, while accepting that all ministers of the

gospel may receive tithe, urge that if it is opposed by denominational leaders and/or members, it is expedient in the interest of unity not to accept tithe. They base this view upon the idea that we should be expedient like Paul. But is this a parallel to our situation today? No!

Let us first look at the principle in 1 Corinthians 9. In the first verses, Paul is defending his apostleship. Obviously there were those in Corinth who considered him less ordained of God than the twelve. Then he asks the question,

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife [margin: woman], as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas [Peter]? 1 Corinthians 9:5.

Then, by referring to the law of Moses, he defends his right to receive tithe of the Corinthians because he is a full-time minister of Christ.

Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 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? 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. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 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. 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? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:8-14.

Here in the most unequivocal terms, Paul defends his right to receive tithe as a self-supporting minister, but he refuses it because of his desire to set an example to the Corinthians.

Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. . . . 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.

1 Corinthians 9:12, 15.

In spite of laboring with his hands in Thessalonica and Corinth, it is not correct to assume that Paul and his co-workers depended entirely upon the earnings from their trades. Paul provided evidence that the Philippians supported him while in both Thessalonica and Corinth.

Notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Philippians 4:14–17.

I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

2 Corinthians 11:8–9.

Sister White clearly identifies Paul as a self-supporting missionary.

It was as a self-supporting missionary that the apostle Paul labored in spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world. While daily teaching the gospel in the great cities of Asia and Europe, he wrought at the trade of a craftsman to sustain himself and his companions.

Ministry of Healing, 154.

Yet the servant of the Lord leaves no doubt that Paul, a self-supporting worker, could appropriately be supported by tithe.

While Paul was careful to set before his converts the plain teaching of Scripture regarding the proper support of the work of God, and while he claimed for himself, as a minister of the gospel, the power to forbear working at secular employment as a means of self-support, yet at various times during his ministry in the great centers of civilization, he wrought at a handicraft for his own maintenance.

Acts of the Apostles, 346.

God has plainly directed that tithe is to be available for all His faithful workers.

In commissioning His disciples to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” Christ assigned to men the work of spreading the gospel. But while some go forth to preach, He calls upon others to answer to His claims upon them for tithes and offerings with which to support the ministry and to spread the printed truth all over the land. 4T 472.

In Hebrews Paul indicates the appropriation of tithe to the Levites. Paul makes it plain that the Levites received tithe by commandment.

And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham. Hebrews 7:5.

A commandment is not optional, it is obligatory. It will be noticed that likewise in the Christian era we are instructed that “the Lord [hath] *ordained* that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14). For a self-supporting ministry to refuse tithe sent to it, on the grounds that it must only go through one channel is a denial of the ministry and calling that God has placed upon that self-supporting ministry, for tithe is God’s chosen method of support for His ministry. Those who seek to place self-supporting ministries under denominational pressure to refuse tithe are in essence *setting themselves in the place of God* to determine their duty and work. Such improper authority is wholly out of place among God’s people. Those who yield to improper pressure are in reality giving the strongest testimony that they agree with, and support, the use of improper authority by Church leaders.

Colin recalls a meeting several years ago when a self-supporting ministry leader bewailed the situation where an African Union President had refused his ministry’s request to send a Christian family into the region. Colin expressed amazement that this ministry leader would deny the gospel to an area populated by about 7,000,000 Christ-purchased souls because of the improper forbiddings of one denominational administrator. Surely we have a higher commission than this. Daily hundreds were

passing beyond the reach of God's witness because of regard for the exercise of an unscriptural human edict.

We do not want to be misunderstood; there is a proper place for authority in God's church, but never does it step outside the boundaries of Scripture. While we support and encourage proper church authority, we must never countenance an abuse of that authority which advocates positions in doctrine or behavior outside Biblical principles. The fourth and fifth chapters of the Book of Acts sets out the principle that ecclesiastical leaders must not be obeyed when their demands encroach upon God's prerogatives.

It is also a significant matter that the self-supporting prophet Elisha received the firstfruits.

And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give unto the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord. 2 Kings 4:42-44.

These firstfruits were designated for the Levites.

The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

Deuteronomy 18:1-4.

Paul even provided evidence that the local church elder, engaging in strong ministry, might rightly receive the tithe.

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 [cf. 1 Corinthians 9:9]. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. 1 Timothy 5:17–18.

There is therefore every evidence in the New Testament that God provided for all His work to be carried forward by tithes and offerings, for *all* His faithful ministers, those which we might call today Conference ministers, *and* those which we normally designate as self-supporting or lay ministers. There is *no* evidence in the New Testament to support the narrow view of an exclusive storehouse or that it limits the use of tithes and offerings to denominational workers. The Biblical evidence does not discriminate between two kinds of ministers as many try to do today but establishes a principle that is to be applied to all faithful ministers—“they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 9:14. This is not the command of Paul, for the text explicitly states that this principle is ordained of the Lord. Further, we must be reminded that the support by tithe is not limited to ordained ministers or those ordained to any office. It is the work of gospel ministry that qualifies a man or a woman to be supported from the tithe.

During the time of Communism, some governments would not permit Conferences or Unions to pay their pastors more than a mere pittance, well below the level of necessity. God moved on the hearts of some of the people to give their tithe directly to the pastors in order that they could survive. This was entirely appropriate. Because most of the denominational leaders in Eastern Europe during the years of Communism were chosen by the Communist governments, and most were agents of the respective secret service agencies, it was wholly consistent with Biblical principles that the lay members return tithe to support faithful ministers directly. Presently there are some pastors whom God has called to do a self-supporting work, who receive no compensation for their labors from denominational channels. It is also entirely appropriate for different reasons than during the Communist era, for them to accept that which God provides by way of tithe.

10

Important Points to Consider

IT IS EVIDENT that the New Testament doctrine does not limit the use of tithe to denominational workers or ordained ministers. Tithe is appropriately applied to all who are fully engaged in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, including Bible Workers.

2. The New Testament evidence supports the use of tithe for local church elders fully engaged in gospel work.
3. The New Testament does not designate a single organization or structure as the one channel.
4. Paul did not refuse to receive tithe because of leadership complaint or pressure. He chose to set an example against the idolatrous practices of the Corinthians and Thessalonians in refusing to work with their hands. *He also sought to reach all people, free and slave, with the Gospel.*
5. The issues facing Paul that led him to refuse to accept tithe in certain situations would logically apply equally to denominational as to self-supporting workers.
6. The issues that Paul was addressing in Thessalonica and Corinth were not matters that are presently confronting the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are not parallel and cannot be used as evidence to support a stand upon the concept of expediency because of denominational leadership pressure. The overwhelming majority of self-supporting institutions are not misusing God's money to aggrandize themselves, but rather to spread the gospel, and prepare God's people for the return of Jesus. This they do in

a most cost-effective manner.

7. Paul's decision to refuse tithe was not imposed upon him by anyone else. It was his own free will decision, *based on local circumstances*.
8. Not only did Paul refuse tithes from the Thessalonians or Corinthians, he also received no offerings from them. Thus, if we use 1 Corinthians 9 as a basis for the prohibition of self-supporting workers receiving tithes for their ministry, then it is logical to also recognize that *self-supporting ministries should not accept offerings nor gifts of any kind* but sustain themselves solely from their own operations. Today in some parts of the world, self-supporting workers have been forbidden by denominational leaders to solicit any kind of donations from Seventh-day Adventist Church members. Should they cease? Not according to the counsel of the Lord. When the General Conference leaders of the first decade of this century forbade Drs. Sutherland and Magan from solicitation from Seventh-day Adventists, Sister White's counsel left no room for debate.

She replied:— You are doing double what they are. Take all the donations you can get. The money belongs to the *Lord* and *not* to these men. The position they take is not of God. The Southern Union Conference is not to own or control you. You cannot turn things over to them.

Magan Diary, May 7: 1907, Paradise Valley.

9. If the principle in Corinth was expediency in relationship to the attitude of leadership, then Sister White would have counseled brethren Sutherland and Magan not to continue to solicit funds. But instead, she wrote strong counsel to the leadership of that era to reverse their unscriptural dictates.
10. The decision as to where to return tithe is that of the giver, not the receiver. The receiver has a God-given responsibility to use the tithe for the *purpose* for which it is designated in inspiration. It is helpful to keep in mind that early Christian and SDA ministers were all self-supporting workers. Should they not have been supported by tithes and

offerings? Since self-supporting work today is not supported by the denominational means, should they not have the same privilege?

11. God gives mankind the decision-making capacity to decide whether to accept His grace or reject it. Yet some administrators believe that the laity cannot, themselves, discern God's plain statements concerning tithes and offerings and thus have to be dictated to in the matter as to where God is directing them to return their tithe. This should not be. The Holy Spirit is well able to guide all believers.
12. Sister White's counsel is ever opposed to withholding tithe, or using it for wrong purposes. These are the real issues that should be addressed. But some have argued that these statements support the view that the tithe should only be returned through the conference channel. They urge that Sister White is speaking of location or geography, but the statements are specifically speaking of the use of tithe. One example follows from the Testimonies. Note that the question is answered unequivocally by the statement itself.

A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in *applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied.* Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things.

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. There should be today in the field one hundred well qualified laborers where now there is but one.^{9T}, 248, 249, emphasis added.

As can be seen from the above statement, there is not the slightest hint that Sister White was speaking about location to which tithe should be returned. She is clearly speaking about the *purpose* or intended object for the use of the tithe.

Another often misapplied quotation is from the same pas-

sage. God's people are instructed by some that their tithe should not be "diverted" from the central storehouse of the denomination.

God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of means. That there may be no haphazard work and no error, He has made our duty on these points very plain. The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, or to use it 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.

The minister should, by precept and example, teach the people to regard the tithe as sacred. He should not feel that he can retain and apply it according to his own judgment because he is a minister. It is not his. He is not at liberty to devote to himself whatever he thinks is his due. He should not give his influence to any plans for *diverting from their legitimate use the tithes and offerings dedicated to God*. They are to be placed in His treasury and held sacred for His service as He has appointed. 9T, 247,248, emphasis added.

Notice that the tithe is to be used as God has appointed after being placed in His treasury. Again there is no hint that the treasury is exclusively confined to the conference channels. Also notice that the emphasis of this statement is on the minister misusing the tithe by applying it to himself or, according to his own judgment, to purposes the Lord has not authorized. The term "His work" in the first of three paragraphs quoted above does not discriminate between denominational and self-supporting work. All evidences of inspiration testify to this fact.

13. The Watson Letter

One source of discussion centers upon the letter written by Sister White to Elder Watson, president of the Colorado Conference (See Chapter 13). This letter has been misapplied also. Some argue, wrongly, that since Sister White was a prophet, she could apply her tithe where the Lord directed, but this

principle does not apply to non-prophets. But there are some serious difficulties with that argument in the letter itself. The letter makes it plain that Sister White appropriated her own tithe at times and the tithe of others to needy ministers directly, not sending it through the regular channels. She stated that she *and others* had been appointed by God to do this. (*Watson Letter*) She commended two sisters for sending tithe to needy ministers in the South (Ibid.).

Some argue that these were denominational ministers who were not on a regular salary and that ever since the establishment of an equal system of remuneration this is no longer necessary nor legitimate. On the contrary, are there not needy fields today that are not being supported by the denomination, where faithful ministers should be receiving their rightful, God ordained portion of the denominational budget? (See Chapter 7). Sister White's counsel to Elder Watson was "No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way." Notoriety primarily means "adverse publicity." In other words Sister White told Elder Watson not to speak adversely against this practice. Surely this is wise counsel for today also. Now that tithe has been made such an issue by some denominational leaders and their supporters, a book such as this one is sadly necessary, for now confusion reigns on this important topic.

Today, as in Sister White's day, God is impressing some men and women to return their tithe to self-supporting ministries. This should not be cause for alarm nor conflict. Her counsel to refrain from giving notoriety regarding this should not have been violated. Surely God in His great mercy is supplying the needs of both denominational and self-supporting ministries providing they are faithfully pursuing His work.

14. Sister White opposes ministers receiving tithe from church members for their personal use.

The minister should, by precept and example, teach the people to regard the tithe as sacred. He should not feel that he can retain and apply it according to his own judgment because he is a minister. It is not his. He is not at liberty to devote to himself whatever he thinks is his due. He should not give his

influence to any plans for diverting from their legitimate use the tithes and offerings dedicated to God. They are to be placed in His treasury and held sacred for His service as He has appointed. 9T 247, 248.

Colin well remembers the passionate statement of Elder Laverne Tucker at the 1988 meeting of eight self-supporting ministry leaders with twenty-three General Conference leaders. Defending his father, Elder J. L. Tucker, founder of "The Quiet Hour," he said, "My Daddy never put one red cent of tithe in his pocket." This was a statement true of all faithful self-supporting ministers.

15. It is not appropriate to discipline or disfellowship those who have been impressed by the Lord to return their tithes and offerings to Him through other than Conference channels. They must be allowed the freedom of conscience to do according as they believe the Lord is leading.
16. It is a most dangerous violation of individual conscience to direct God's members to return their tithes and offerings only through conference channels. It is an even greater violation to refuse such members church office. The offense is magnified further when such faithful members are threatened with church discipline. Just as surely is God's Word violated when faithful self-supporting institutions are vilified for accepting tithe for the appropriate ministry to which God has called them.
17. It is the responsibility of both denominational and self-supporting leaders to make sure that the laborers in their field are faithful, dedicated workers of whom God's children can have no question as to their suitability to be supported by tithe for their ministry.
18. True unity comes through truth that sanctifies.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17).
(This statement is the key to Christ's prayer for unity.)

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and

of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Ephesians 4:11–15.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:22–23.

“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” Teachers may suppose that they can teach in their own wisdom, retaining their human imperfections; but Christ, the divine Teacher, whose work is to restore to man that which was lost through the fall, sanctified Himself for His work. He offered Himself unto God as a sacrifice for sin, giving His life for the life of the world. He would have those for whom He paid such a ransom, sanctified “through the truth,” and He has set them an example. *There is no sanctification aside from the truth,*—the word.

Fundamentals of Christian Education 432, emphasis added.

Unity is the sure result of Christian perfection.

The Sanctified Life, 85.

Our plea is that we all, both denominational and self-supporting leaders, put to rest this issue of the storehouse and let us work together wholeheartedly to establish a people who are united because they have accepted the truth of God’s Word and Christ as their Savior, and have permitted the Holy Spirit to shed abroad in their hearts the love of God. Then the Lord can entrust this united people with His Holy Spirit, and we will go out conquering and to conquer with the mighty power of the Latter Rain to take the Loud Cry to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

III

Spirit of Prophecy Counsel on Tithe and Financial Support of Self-Supporting Work

IT MUST BE understood that in the context of the topic of the book more weight must be afforded to the Spirit of Prophecy counsel given in respect of tithes and offerings after the establishment of the first recognized self-supporting institution—Madison College. Though there were a number of self-supporting schools before and shortly after the establishing of the denominational organization they appear to have faded out for a period of more than twenty years before God intervened in the establishment of the Southern Missionary Society. Because of this, divine statements made in the later nineteenth century concerning tithes and offerings, though valid and important, may have been written without having self-supporting institutions in mind. However the pre-1904 counsels do provide valid principles that certainly apply to all God's work and not exclusively to denominational work. The following are Spirit of Prophecy statements that focus upon the appropriate use of tithe.

1. *To help neglected ministers.*

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 to properly support their families. Letter to Elder Watson, President of the Colorado Conference, January 22, 1905, emphasis added.

2. *To help aged (retired) ministers.*

While 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.

Ibid., emphasis added.

[Note: For example Colin presently supports with his tithe a retired pastor in an Eastern European country who faithfully served the Lord for many years after spending five years in a Siberian prison for distributing portions of *The Great Controversy*. He receives no sustentation because both the Russian church leaders and the church leaders in his homeland have allegedly claimed the other is responsible because on the one hand he served longer in Russia than in his homeland but on the other hand he is now retired in his homeland. Thus the sustentation program has not solved all pastors' needs.]

3. *To help non-Conference supported Bible workers.*

There are minister's wives, . . . 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.*

Spalding-Magan Collection, 117, emphasis added.

4. *Does not always limit God's treasury to the Denomination and those who appropriated their tithe according to need are commended.*

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.

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; and

if this matter is given publicity, it will create 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.*

Letter to Elder Watson, op. cit., emphasis added.

God grant that the voices which have been so quickly raised to say that all the money invested in the work must go through the *appointed channel at Battle Creek* [the then General Conference location], *shall not be heard.* The people to whom God has given his means are amenable to Him alone. It is their privilege to give direct aid and assistance to missions. It is because of the misappropriation of means that the Southern field has no better showing than it has today.

Spalding-Magan Collection, 176, 177, emphasis added.

[Note: this statement dispels the erroneous concept that the treasury (or storehouse) is exclusively the confernece (regular) organization. Sister White explicitly rejects such a concept. Surely today in many areas of the world field, the most central work, the sharing of the everlasting gospel, is being left undone. Those taking up this work should be faithfully supported by tithe.]

5. *Sister White approved others who appropriated their tithe independent of the denominational channels:*

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.

Letter to Elder Watson, op. cit.

[Note: Remember that Sister White is here referring to the self-supporting ministers working for the Southern Missionary Society.]

6. *Sister White accepted tithe from others for special appropriations.*

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,' and I will; and I have done so.

Letter to Elder Watson, op. cit.

When means has been pressed upon me, I have refused it, or appropriated it to such charitable objects as the Publishing Association. I shall do so no more. I shall do my duty in labor as ever, but *my fears of receiving means to use for the Lord are gone*. This case of Sister More has fully aroused me to see the work of Satan in depriving us of means.

1T, 678, 679, emphasis added.

7. *Sister White sometimes reluctantly accepted tithes.*

You ask if I will accept tithes from you and use it in the cause of God where most needed. In reply, I will say that I shall not refuse to do this, but at the same time I will tell you that there is a better way.

It is better to put confidence in the ministers of the conference where you live, and in the officers of the church where you worship. Draw nigh to your brethren. Love them with a true heart fervently, and encourage them to bear their responsibilities in the fear of God. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Letter 96, 1911, p. 1. (To Mrs. J. J. Gravelle, December 29, 1911.)

[Note: Sister White may have recognized a wrong attitude by Sister Gravelle that motivated her to refrain from returning her tithes through her local church to her local conference. However though giving the counsel she did, Sister White did not refuse to take her tithes nor did she insist on Church discipline. So today, those choosing to return tithes to self-supporting ministries must search the motives of their heart in the decisions they make.]

8. *Sister White appropriated funds for ministers' families even when people were dissatisfied with the Organization.*

I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. *Circumstances alter cases*. I would not advise that any one make a practice of gathering up the tithes money. But for years there have now and then been *persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithes who have placed the tithes in my hands* and said if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the family of the most needy minister they could find. I have taken the money, given them a receipt for it and told them how it was appropriated

Letter to Elder Watson, op. cit., emphasis added.

9. *Sister White counseled silence by a Conference leader, otherwise more would follow suit.*

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 to Elder Watson, op. cit.

10. *Tithe is to be supplied to men and women laboring in word and doctrine.*

The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women. *Evangelism*, 492, emphasis added.

The tithe . . . is to be especially devoted to *the support of those who are bearing God's message to the world.*

(*Welfare Ministry*, 277, emphasis added.)

The tithe you have withheld I reserve for the support of My servants in their work of opening the Scriptures to those who are in the regions of darkness, who do not understand My law. 6T, 387.

[Note: There is not the faintest hint in the context of these three counsels to discriminate between denominational and self-supporting work. The question to be focused upon is not whether faithful self-supporting ministers should be supported from tithe. The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy leave not a shadow of doubt that they should. The real question is whether unfaithful ministers, be they denominational or self-supporting, be supported from tithe?]

11. *Sister White warned that poor management of tithe by leaders in itself is not sufficient reason for withholding tithe.*

Some have been dissatisfied and have said: "I will not longer pay my tithe, for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work." But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right. 9T, 249.

[Note: The issue at stake in this passage is (1) alleged poor man-

agement, not sin or worldliness, (2) *withholding* tithe; not *returning* tithe to self-supporting ministries, (3) the tithe was being withheld “from the work of God.” This passage, misapplied by many to oppose the acceptance of tithe by self-supporting gospel workers, is irrelevant to that issue.]

12. *Sister White warned against supporting unsanctified ministers.*

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. 1T, 261, 262, emphasis added.

If God pronounces a woe upon those who are called to preach the truth and refuse to obey, a heavier woe rests upon those who take upon them this sacred work without clean hands and pure hearts. 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.

2T, 552, emphasis added.

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.

3T, 553, emphasis added.

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? Where has been heard throughout the churches the prayer for the help of God? Where has been heard throughout the churches the prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit? Dissatisfied and disheartened, we turn away from the scene.

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. Have we not seen enough of human wisdom? Shall we not now seek God in earnestness and simplicity, and serve him with heart and mind and strength? *The Kress Collection*, 120, emphasis added.

[Note the contrast between Sister White's counsel on the one hand when there is concern regarding the poor management of tithe usage and on the other hand when it is used to support unfaithful ministers who undoubtedly are leading children, youth and adults, not to the heavenly home prepared for them but to eternal destruction. It would be altogether against the purpose of Christ's sacrifice and ministry to encourage knowingly the support of ministers who are Satan's agents and not God's messengers of truth.

A number of those faithful in their stewardship have been perplexed when confronted with a statement which, superficially, appears to contradict the body of counsels on this subject of stewardship in the Spirit of Prophecy. The statement reads:

Many of our brethren have expressed themselves to the effect that if their Conference continues to pay money to such [unconverted] ministers, they will withhold their tithes. We do not say that it would be right for individuals to withhold from the Lord that which is His. Series A No.1, 13.

We would make two pertinent observations concerning this statement. Firstly, this statement is directed to those who withhold their tithes, not to those who continue to return their tithes to self-supporting ministries which are faithful to the Lord's calling. That matter is simply not addressed in this statement. Secondly, Sister White does not condemn those who withhold their tithes from the *conference*, but those who withhold their tithes from *the Lord*. As we shall see, Sister White in a most emphatic manner states that no tithes should be paid to unconsecrated pastors.

When the above quotation is misused in support of the payment of tithe, even to fund unconverted pastors, needless to say the remainder of the paragraph and its succeeding paragraph are rarely if ever quoted.

Thus it does well for us to continue the paragraph and also quote the following paragraph.

But on the other hand, it is certainly very wrong for the Conference to give credentials to such men, and *it is nothing less than sin to take the Lord's money to pay for such labor*. There must be earnest labor with such men; and if they will not

reform, there can be no reason why they should continue to hold credentials.

There are many that are even light and frivolous, and by this course they do more harm than good. These, too, should be labored with faithfully, and if they do not give evidence of reform, they should certainly not be continued in the ministry; for only evil can result from their work. Ibid., emphasis added.

Here is the most direct manner Sister White states that it is a SIN to pay unfaithful pastors from the tithe. This is true whether the pastor is in the organized work or self-supporting work. The admonition must be equally applied in both arenas of service. Yet, many pastors known to be unfaithful to the Lord continue to receive means from His treasury. This matter must be carefully considered by all who would be faithful stewards of their Lord's means.]

13. *Means should not go through just a few hands.*

Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in the 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. Help is to be sought from every possible source.

Spalding-Magan Collection, 421,422

- January 6, 1908, emphasis added.

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.

Testimonies to Ministers, 321, emphasis added.

[Note: The above statements were made in respect of non-tithe expenditures.]

14. *Members are amenable to God alone for stewardship of their means.*

God grant that the voices which have been so quickly raised to say that *all the money invested in the work must go through*

the appointed channel at Battle Creek, shall not be heard. The people to whom God has given His means are amenable to Him alone. It is their privilege to give direct aid and assistance to missions. . . .

I do not consider it the duty of the Southern branch of our work, in the publication and handling of books, to be under the dictation of our established publishing houses. And if means can be devised to reduce the expense of publishing and circulating books, let this be done.

Letter to Brother Daniells, June 28, 1901; *Manuscript Release* 14, 207, emphasis added.

Those who have had experience in the work of God should be encouraged to follow the guidance and counsel of the Lord. *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. . . . *To those in our conferences who 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 the Lord is not to be thus trammelled. This wonderful burden of responsibility which some suppose God has placed upon them with their official position, has never been laid upon them. *To Those Bearing Responsibilities in Washington and Other Centers*, Jan. 6, 1908, emphasis added.

[Note: More recent Annual Council actions, which require all funds sent to ministries, mission fields, etc., outside the donor's conference must be returned to the donor's home conference, cannot be supported in the light of divine counsel.]

15. *If ministers don't discourage members there are adequate funds.*

There is not a class of people in the world who are more willing to sacrifice of their means to advance the cause than are Seventh-day Adventists. If the ministers do not utterly discourage them by their indolence and inefficiency, and by their lack of spirituality, they will generally respond to any appeal that may be made that commends itself to their judgment and consciences. But they want to see fruit. And it is right that the

brethren in New York should demand fruit of their ministers. What have they done? What are they doing?
3T, 49.

16. *Individual responsibility for use of means.*

The Lord has made us individually His stewards. We each hold a solemn responsibility to invest our means ourselves. . . . *God does not lay upon you the burden of asking the conference, or any counsel of men, whether you shall use your means as you see fit to advance the work of God.*

Special Instructions Relating to the Review & Herald Office & the Work at Battle Creek, 41,42.

God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. In all His dealings with human beings He recognizes the principle of personal responsibility. He seeks to encourage a sense of personal dependence, and to impress the need of personal guidance. His gifts are committed to men as individuals. 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. 7T, 176.

17. *Sister White warned of the consequences of leaders seeking to bind up their fellow men.*

Laws and rules are being made at the center of the work that will soon be broken into atoms. Men are not to dictate. It is not for those in places of authority to employ all their powers to sustain some, while others are cast down, ignored, forsaken, and left to perish. But it is the duty of the leaders to lend a helping hand to all who are in need. . . .

If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow-laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus. . . . There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon. But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unity must and will be preserved.

Review & Herald, July 23, 1895.

18. *The Kellogg Issue.*

May 4, 1898 the General Conference authorized a tithe-for-

tithe exchange between Battle Creek Sanitarium and the General Conference. Dr. Kellogg had urged that tithe be set aside to support medical missionary workers in the field. When this was not done, Dr. Kellogg threatened to retain all tithe from the workers at the Sanitarium and employ medical missionary workers. Sister White intervened on Dr. Kellogg's behalf and under her counsel the General Conference continued to receive and receipt the tithe, but sent it back to the Battle Creek Sanitarium to employ medical missionary workers, i.e. "a tithe-for-tithe exchange."

Sister White's letter to Uriah Smith (*Review & Herald* editor) and George Irwin (General Conference President) on behalf of Dr. Kellogg is important to our understanding of the tithe issue today:

Why, I ask you, have not special efforts been made to employ medical missionary workers in our churches? Dr. Kellogg will make some moves that I would feel sorry to have him feel compelled to make. He says if no means are allowed to carry the message by medical missionary laborers into the churches, he shall separate the tithe that is paid into the Conference [from the Battle Creek Sanitarium employees], to sustain the medical missionary work. You should come to an understanding, and work harmoniously. For him to separate the tithe from the treasury would be a necessity I greatly dread. If this money in tithe is paid by workers into the treasury, why, I ask, should not the amount be apportioned to the carrying forward of the medical missionary work?
7 MR, 366.

It was this counsel of Sister White that led to the tithe-for-tithe arrangement referred to above. This was fundamentally the same kind of arrangement that some self-supporting ministries had in the past with their conferences, e.g. *Amazing Facts* with the Chesapeake Conference. A return to this principle would be in harmony with divine counsel. It must be noted that Sister White explained that the proposed action of Dr. Kellogg to keep the tithe would be a necessity that Kellogg would feel compelled to make if the leaders did not make an appropriate allocation of tithe. Sister White dreaded if this would have to be the case. Clearly she looked to the leaders to act responsibly and fairly in this situation. However there is no

evidence that Sister White forbade Dr. Kellogg from withholding the tithe to fund self-supporting medical missionaries.

It is evident that the preferred process for returning tithes is through denominational channels. Yet this depends upon the faithfulness of Church leaders in following the direction of the Lord. Other channels must be accessed when leaders fail to fulfil their responsibilities.

Those who are doing medical missionary work at Battle Creek should have the full sanction and cooperation of the church. . . . 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 missionaries to work in the churches, they will do it without your consent, for this work must and will be done.

Manuscript Release 11, 218.

19. *Financing self-supporting work.*

I appeal to our brethren in South Dakota to help in this emergency, and make a liberal gift to the Madison School, that they may erect a chapel and school building. Such a building should have been provided for them long ago. Let us not leave these men to work under present disadvantages, when time is too precious, and the need for trained workers in the South is so great. . . .

In the common schools some things are taught that are a hindrance rather than a blessing. We need schools where the word of God is made the basis of education. The Madison Training School for teachers should have the hearty support of God's people. Therefore I ask you and your associates on the conference committee to act liberally in helping our brethren in Madison in this important work.

Letter to Elder E. G. Hayes, February 5, 1907.

It is impossible to make the Madison School what it should be unless it is given a liberal share in the means that shall be appropriated for the work in the South. Will our brethren act their part in the Spirit of Christ?

Special Testimonies B, No. 11, p. 3.

Some have entertained the idea that because the school at Madison is not *owned by a conference organization*, those who are in charge of the school should *not be permitted to call upon*

our people for the means that is greatly needed to carry on their work. *This idea needs to be corrected.* In the *distribution of the money* that comes into the Lord's treasury, you are *entitled to a portion* just as verily as are those connected with other needy enterprises that are carried forward in harmony with the Lord's instruction.

Letter to Prof. P.T. Magan, May 14, 1907, emphasis added.

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.

To Those Bearing Responsibilities in Washington and Other Centers, January 6, 1908.

To those in our conferences who have felt that they had authority to forbid the gathering of means in certain territories 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 trammelled. God is being faithfully served by those 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 brethren, and will give them credit for having love for souls and a desire to labor unselfishly to promote the interests of the cause. Ibid., emphasis added.

In the past *Brethren Sutherland and Magan have used their tact and ability in raising means for the work in other places.* They have worked and planned for the good of the cause as a

whole. And the time has now come when these faithful workers should receive from their brethren, the Lord's stewards, the means that they need to carry on successfully the work of the Madison School and the little Madison Sanitarium.

I appeal to our brethren to whom the Lord has entrusted the talent of means. Will you now help the workers at Madison who have been instrumental in raising means for many enterprises? As the Lord's messenger, I ask you to help the Madison School now. This is its time of need. The money which you possess is the Lord's entrusted capital. It should be held in readiness to answer the call in places where the Lord has need of it.

An Appeal for the Madison School,
March 25, 1908, emphasis added.

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 the people whom the Lord impresses* to help. They should have means—God's means with which to work.

Ibid., emphasis added.

12

J. Edson White, the Southern Missionary Society, and Self-Supporting Work

THE MINISTRY of J. Edson White, second son (elder surviving son) of James and Ellen White, offers a unique insight into (1) the interrelationship of self-supporting and denominational work; (2) the financing of early self-supporting work; (3) Sister White's philosophy of financial support for self-supporting work.

Edson White, prior to entering into full-time self-supporting work in 1893, had at various times been both denominationally employed and self employed. There were times when he had experienced great spiritual struggles. His decision to go into self-supporting ministry coincided with a deep revival of spiritual fervor in his personal life (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1966). In the fall of 1893 Edson White and W. O. Palmer were among those who attended a ministerial institute held at Battle Creek. During the institute, these two men were inspired by the presentation of ten manuscripts written by Sister White concerning the need for the work among the Afro-American people in the South. They especially responded to her call for the establishing of small schools for educating the Afro-American people. Thus commenced a work that has been a powerful success story in the development of the work among Afro-Americans. (Ibid., pp. 825, 826.)

It is this work that has provided fascinating insights into the interrelationship that can exist between self-supporting and denominational workers. Edson White was known to possess a somewhat independent spirit, yet to be a man with a kind heart. It would seem that after many years of struggle to find his appropriate mission within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he found

it in his dedicated work for the Afro-American people in the South.

With evident energy he pursued his vision. Below is a summary of the work he initiated, somewhat in chronological order. It is designed to show the interplay between self-supporting and denominational work, especially as it applies to financial support through tithes and offerings. The asterisks indicate self-supporting work.

- * 1) 1893 White and Palmer begin as self-supporting workers
Ibid., 826.
- * 2) 1893 They began to write, in simple words, the *Gospel Primer*—a reading book to be used in the education of Afro-American people. It was printed at the Review & Herald Publishing Association. Ibid.
- * 3) Early 1894 they began to build a boat they named the “Morning Star” to use for their home and ministry in the South. Ibid.
- 4) When the boat was almost completed White and Palmer met with the General Conference Committee. They were then employed denominationally as conference missionary workers, they were given credentials and were assigned to Mississippi (their chosen place of labor). Their salaries were set at eight dollars per week. Ibid.
- 5) In January 1895 they began their work for the Afro-American people. Ibid.
- * 6) They had taken six literature evangelists with them who sold the *Gospel Primer* at each port of call to provide support for themselves and royalties that White and Palmer used to sustain their work. Ibid.
- * 7) In 1896, the self-supporting workers engaged in this enterprise organized themselves into the Southern Missionary Society.” (Ibid., 1419). Thus, though White and Palmer were credentialed missionaries supported financially, this was not the case with the other workers and the Society itself was a self-supporting entity. This parallels the way present-day self-supporting ministries, such as Quiet Hour, have operated.

- 8) Sister White wrote many letters to her son encouraging him in his work. Ibid.
- 9) In 1897 Edson White was ordained to the gospel ministry. Ibid.
- *10) In May, 1898, *The Gospel Herald*, a monthly paper, was begun which told of the work being accomplished and made frequent appeals for funds to further advance the ministry of the Southern Missionary Society. Ibid.
- *11) Edson White wrote twelve books in support of the work of the Southern Missionary Society. Ibid.
- 12) At the turn of the century the headquarters of the Southern Missionary Society were removed to Nashville. Ibid.
- 13) In 1901 the Southern Union Conference was organized and the Southern Missionary Society was accepted as a branch of the Union.
- *14) But for some time the Southern Missionary Society remained independently administered and continued as largely a volunteer project up to at least 1906. Ibid.
- 15) Deep concerns developed over Edson White's lack of fiscal responsibility. Sister White acknowledged this and supported a plan in 1902 where Edson would not have a separate treasury from the Union.
- 16) By 1903 the Southern Publishing Association was separated from the Southern Missionary Society.
- *17) It was during this period that Sister White and other women were called of God to allocate some of their tithes for the volunteer Afro-American ministers who were laboring with the Southern Missionary Society. Watson letter, 1905.
- *18) In 1905 representatives of the Southern Missionary Society came to the Colorado Conference soliciting funds, including tithes, for their work in the South. It was this that led to the Colorado President's distress which Sister White addressed in her letter to him (See chapter 13). Ibid.
- 19) After 1906 the work of the Southern Missionary Society

was gradually absorbed into the management of the Southern Union Conference. The Afro-American work came under the Union's umbrella and the Afro-American pastors were gradually absorbed into denominational work and supported by the denominational treasury.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, op.cit. p. 1240.

In the early years of the Southern Missionary Society, Sister White strongly endorsed her son Edson's appeals directly to church members for funds.

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 in the Lord. There is a way open to 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 [denominational] papers; because it will not be honored. Send direct to the people. God's ways are not to be counter worked, 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.*

Spalding-Magan Collection, 498, emphasis added.

However the situation changed in 1902. Edson had founded the Dixie Health Food Company and had published greatly exaggerated claims in a Nashville newspaper. Sister White described it as a "sensational article" in which Edson claimed \$500,000 would be expended in the project. Sister White acknowledged that Edson was not a "close financier" and should be asked to relinquish financial responsibilities.

Yet as late as January 1906, Edson White stated,

In a conversation with Mother today she definitely stated to me that the instructions I have received in regard to the work have not been revoked.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, op.cit.

In 1901 Sister White wrote to the newly elected President of the General Conference, Elder A. G. Daniells in plain language. No doubt she had Edson White's work in mind.

So often the same old difficulties arise and are presented in regard to disturbing the “regular lines”. . . . How many more years will it be before our brethren receive the clear, keen perception which calls evil evil and good good? When will men cease to depend on the same routine which has left so much work undone, so many fields unworked? . . . If we can get away from the regular lines into something which, though irregular, *is after God's order*, it may cut away something of the irregular working which has led away from Bible principles. . . . Let us break the bands which bind us.

Letter to A. G. Daniells, June 1900, emphasis added.

In 1899 Elder Willie White wrote concerning the Southern Work:

Mother makes one important exception to the above plan [sending funds through the Conference]. She says that whenever the Lord has plainly spoken regarding an important work that is being neglected, as in the case of the work among the Southern people, and then the General Conference continues to neglect it, that the workers connected with the missionary enterprise are free to go to the churches anywhere and everywhere, and raise means for the prosecution of the work that has been plainly pointed out should be done. Letter from W. C. White to Percy T. Magan, 1899, *W. C. White Letters*, 270.

Let us now review the information gathered from the ministry of Elder J. Edson White and the Southern Missionary Society.

- 1) The first self-supporting organization after the establishment of the denominational organization in 1861 was not Madison College in 1904. For example, there were self-supporting elementary schools operating at least until 1872, eleven years after the establishment of denominational organization (*Ibid.*).

It is also noted that self-supporting workers began the Seventh-day Adventist work in Australia (Alexander Dickson early 1860s); in Europe (M. B. Czeslowski in 1864); in Asia (Abram LaRue in 1888).

- 2) The Southern Missionary Society was partly a self-supporting organization even beyond 1906 when Elder G. I. Butler, former General Conference president, became president of its Board. It is not unusual for a self-supporting ministry to

be chaired by a denominational worker or leader. For example Amazing Facts was chaired by the Chesapeake Conference president for many years.

3) The evidence of the Southern Missionary Society's independence from the denominational organization is documented as follows:

a) Edson White purchased and owned the Morning Star (Ibid., p. 826).

b) The Southern Missionary Society incorporated separately in 1898 (Ibid., p. 1239).

c) All properties purchased were held by this private corporation (Ibid.).

d) All business transactions were conducted through its regularly elected officers (Ibid.).

e) Sister White supported this independent incorporation. "The incorporation was approved by Ellen G. White, who counseled the society that men whom God had led to pioneer a new work should organize so as to place the work under the management of those who had borne its burdens and who understood its necessities" (Quoted in Ibid.).

f) For many years, at least up to 1906 and for some years beyond that date, the leaders lived a self-sacrificing life style, some being supported by their own labors and from donations (Ibid., pp. 1239,1240).

g) These donations included tithe as is confirmed in the Watson letter of 1905 and as is indicated by the following statement, "The ministers [after 1906] were to be supported by the tithe in the local conferences, and the mission schools by the society's funds, received from contributions throughout the country. In practice, since only three of the Southern conferences were self-supporting [i.e. able to fully sustain themselves by the contributions from the church members] at the time, *the society furnished ministerial help also* (Ibid., p. 1240, emphasis added).

4) Sister White's and other women's support with their tithe

for the faithful ministers working with the Southern Missionary Society was prior to any action taken to support some of these ministers denominationally. The Watson letter, 1905.

- 5) Above all else, the experiences of Edson White and the Southern Missionary Society elucidate the evidence that God makes little distinction between His chosen denominational work and His chosen self-supporting work. Clearly the General Conference was willing to support two self-supporting workers—Edson White and W. O. Palmer—with tithe funds and Sister White was willing to support other non-Conference workers with her tithe funds.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, op.cit.

13

How Some Past Leaders Understood the Tithe Issue

WHILE ONLY the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy counsel can be accepted as inspired, yet the written statements of some past leaders shed light upon the understandings and practices of our past Church history.

When in 1906 Dr. Stewart, a colleague of Dr. Kellogg, wrote alleging inconsistencies in Sister White's statements and practices in regard to tithe and other issues, Sister White decided not to answer these accusations directly. However she approved of some of the leaders responding. Their response concerning the tithe was presented in what was commonly called the *blue book*. While no names are attached to the document we know the names of some men who were either aware of its production or actually participated in its production or were asked to do research or to give counsel concerning the book's contents. The following is a portion of the response in the *blue book* to Dr. Stewart's accusations:

As to the proper use of the tithe: the outline of a statement upon this subject which was agreed upon was briefly this: To give extracts from Sister White's writings as to the tithe and its use; to show that her testimony and her own usual practice was in favor of paying the tithe into the regularly designated treasury, to be used under the counsel of the committees appointed for such purposes; *to show further from her writings that when those who have charge of the expenditure of the tithe so far fail in the discharge of their duty that the regularly organized channels for the distribution of the tithe become hindrances to its proper use, then in order to carry out the divine plan that the tithe should be expended in the wisest manner for the furtherance of the work, individuals have the right to pay their*

tithes direct to needy fields; but that this involves a considerable degree of personal responsibility, which must be assumed by those who decide to follow this plan. It was thought that this matter could be handled in a way to show that the departure from the regular plan was authorized only when the regular plans failed to be carried out by those in positions of responsibility (Document File 213 often attributed to A.G. Daniells, W.W. Prescott, W.C. White, and Dr. Rand, c. 1907).

Counsel from a contemporary leader on tithe

When it comes to the tithe issue, Colin, I have always felt that a reasonable approach would be to work on a basis similar to that which some of the other denominational institutions and self-supporting institutions are using at present. That is, not solicit tithe, and not do anything that was going to encourage folks to believe that you were receiving tithe, but if tithe comes in from non-Seventh-day Adventists, or if there is some other tithe that the church wouldn't get anyway and it was sent on to you this I believe is in keeping with what the Voice of Prophecy, Amazing Facts and some of the other groups are doing. I haven't made specific inquiry in recent months or years, so they may have changed, but I think it would be safe to approach it in that manner.

This is something along the line that you had suggested in working with your local conference and I would encourage you to stay close to the conference in working out a solution satisfactory to both of you in this area. Also encourage Ron [Spear] to work with the brethren in this.

Letter from Robert H. Pierson, General Conference President 1966-1979, to Colin Standish, August 7, 1988.

The Full Text of the Watson Letter

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.

[Note: The Watson letter seemingly supplies the answer to the perplexity that some students of the tithe issue have faced. When the financing of Madison College became such a controverted issue it has been thought quite surprising that Sister White made no plain statement concerning the use of tithe by this self-supporting institution. Certainly, if it was at liberty to accept offerings but not tithes for the gospel ministry then Sister White would have spoken or written explicitly. But if this self-supporting institution had *no* divine prohibition to reject tithe it is now evident to us why she would provide no public counsel concerning this matter. In the Lord's wisdom, it was not best to publicize the matter. Previous denominational leaders followed this principle very well. Unfortunately the recent pronouncements by denominational representatives have led to the consequences Sister White feared—controversy and public disagreements.]

14

Conference Responsibilities

AN UNWARRANTED ZEAL has been noted in some Conference officials as they promote the concept that the Conference is the sole storehouse. While no informed self-supporting worker would assert that self-supporting ministries are the sole storehouse, some Conference workers appear to exercise no similar balance in their approach. The storehouse is located where the gospel truth is being proclaimed in its fullness. It is not the preserve of a single channel of the church work. (See chapter 11).

Many denominational officers have made an inadequate study of the subject. On other occasions poor information is provided to God's flock on the matter of their financial stewardship. When an individual takes a strong stand upon a matter for which he has no solid divine mandate, it is not uncommon for the individual to proclaim his position more dogmatically and in a more demanding manner than when such divine approval is present.

Is it not time that pastors seek to attain the highest level of fidelity to truth, Christian standards and worship practice, together with a personal Christ-like character, so that they will be the holy shepherds for which the sacred tithes (and offerings) were designated? This is true equally for those of us who labor for God in the self-supporting arena as those in Conference work. It is purposeless for Conference workers to promote the faulty concept that they are God's designated sole recipients of tithes when they misrepresent God's call to ministry. In the day of judgment each of us, self-supporting and Conference ministers, must give an account of our work for our Lord and our use of His means. This fact greatly focuses the thoughts of the authors.

Let us illustrate the problem with a specific example. In April, 1997 the North German Union Conference constituency voted by approximately a seventy-five percent vote to join the German Council of Churches (ACK), as a guest member. One month later, despite strong opposition from the Baden-Wurttemberg Conference, the constituency of the Southern German Union Conference also voted by 129-109 to join, as guest members, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland (ACK)—the Council of Christian Churches in Germany. The ACK plainly states that its aim is:

Promoting unity among Christians - this is the goal of the ecumenical movement. This unity is expressed in worldwide as well as national, regional and local alliances.

ACK - info p.2.

Article 14 of the constitution of the ACK states that “The means necessary for the duties of the ACK are raised by both members and GUEST MEMBERS, according to their size and financial ability” (emphasis added). Thus if the S.D.A. Church becomes a guest member it would be obliged to donate some of God’s means for the promotion of the satanic ecumenical movement.

Pr. Holger Teubert, Director of Public Relations and Information of the German S.D.A. Church, asked in 1985, “Should the S.D.A. Church become a member of the ACK?” His answer was, “Participation in defraying the running expenses of the ACK would invite the reproach that believers are co-financing the ecumenical movement with their tithes and offerings” (Report of Lecture p.43). In April 1987, Pr. Teubert wrote, “All Adventists, even the most progressive ones, do not want any connection with the ecumenical movement as a super church organization. They do not want membership or even guest membership, since that includes participation” (Remnant Herald, June 1997, p.4).

Tragically the Euro-Africa Division supported the move to support the ecumenical movement.

The S.D.A. periodical, *Adventecho*, May 1992 published the “Declaration of the Euro-African Division of SDAs and Their Endeavour for the Unity of Christians”. This declaration stated that “We are therefore willing to serve unitedly with church organizations when this is possible without compromising our

own confessional identity. . . . This includes participating in the work of theological commissions and the guest membership of the ACK.”

In a letter dated Sept. 19, 1994, written by the then president of the Euro-African Division, Pr. Edwin Ludescher, to the members of the S.D.A. local church in Schweinfurt, Germany, he urged the protesting members “to consent to the united declaration of the two German Unions concerning the way of dealing with this issue of becoming a guest members of the ACK” (Ibid.).

When sixty-nine faithful laymen wrote to the General Conference in November, 1996, seeking the intervention of the world leadership, they received a curt reply telling them to confine their correspondence on the matter to the Euro-Africa Division administration. As we have seen above, the Division leadership had already made its position plain.

“Guest” membership is a step toward full membership. God’s sacred means is used to pay annual fees to support an organization which is designed to uplift the papacy and fulfill Revelation 14:8, to promote Sunday laws and persecute faithful Sabbath-keepers. These decisions are a total denial of the faith and sabotage of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. Quite understandably, faithful German Seventh-day Adventists see no conscientious way to support the German Unions with their sacred means. To do so would be to deny the very purpose of stewardship. In countries such as the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in full membership with the National Councils of Churches—the Solomon Island Christian Association (SICA) and the Vanuatu Council of Christian Churches (VCCC), respectively.

Even more serious implications exist. In some countries membership fees in National Councils of Churches are levied upon a per capita membership basis. Some Seventh-day Adventists are seriously considering whether they should retain their membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church when they know that their names on a church roll increases the fee paid to the fallen churches of Babylon. It is a terrible dilemma which church administrators have no right to impose upon God’s flock.

Similarly, self-supporting ministers who commit adultery or are guilty of misuse of God’s means dishonor their calling and,

like unfaithful Conference ministers, are unfit recipients of sacred means.

In the 1980's the Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate responded to the question concerning the Spirit of Prophecy's purported support of the Conference alone as the storehouse for the Lord's tithe. Because of his position, the Secretary was in a position to cite the strongest evidence available. This he did in an article published in the *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 6, 1987. The Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate stated,

On May 4, 1898, the General Conference authorized a tithe-for-tithe exchange between the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the General Conference. Dr. Kellogg had threatened to retain all Sanitarium tithe and use it for medical missionary purposes if the Conference would not agree to this arrangement. Ellen White wrote at the time:

Why, I ask you [Uriah Smith and George A. Irwin, Review and Herald Editor, and GC President, respectively], have not special efforts been made to employ medical missionary workers in our churches? Dr. Kellogg will make some moves that I would feel sorry to have him feel compelled to make. He says if no means is allowed to carry the message by medical missionary laborers into the churches, he shall separate the tithe that is paid into the Conference, to sustain the medical missionary work. You should come to an understanding, and work harmoniously. For him to separate the tithe from the treasury would be a necessity I greatly dread. (David J. Lee, *Ellen White's Example and Teachings on the Disbursement of the Tithe*, p. 59).

Sister White did not express her reasons for her dread. It certainly was not seen by her as a prohibition for the use of tithe by a ministry of the church which was not directly operated by the General Conference organization as was true of the Medical Society which controlled all our medical work at that time. Unfortunately the Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate omitted the words which followed the above quotation. These words were,

If this money in tithe is paid by the workers into the treasury, why, I ask, should not that amount be apportioned to the carrying forward of the medical missionary work? (Ibid.)

Unfortunately the Conferences have seldom, and in most cases, never, followed Sister White's counsel to provide means for faithful self-supporting work. It is because of this that Sister White spoke so strongly that Dr. Kellogg might "feel compelled to make" a move to arbitrarily use the tithes of the medical workers to support their work. Those tithes, manifestly, should have been freely returned to the medical work by the church organization. It is time for our Conference administrators to respond appropriately in these matters.

One of the most tragic results of the efforts to focus upon the self-supporting recipients of tithe, has been the lack of focus upon the teaching of divine stewardship principles to our church members. Not only is the percentage of tithe-returning Seventh-day Adventists decreasing, but the ratio of world mission offerings to tithe is decreasing. There is a divine cure for these maladies—(1) the thorough conversion of the pastoral ministry, (2) the challenging of the membership with the solemn end-time messages, (3) the holy calling to live the Christ-centered life, and (4) the presentation before our people of the self-denial foundation of true Christian stewardship. Holy lives and sacrificial stewardship are inseparable.

15

Fiscal Responsibilities and Conclusions

ONE OF THE MOST frequently raised issues concerning self-supporting work is fiscal responsibility. Not infrequently it is assumed that the denominational work has developed great accountability but that there is little if any accountability practiced by self-supporting institutions. This was an accusation made, for example, in the article "Our Union President Shares His Views About Sending Tithes to Independent Ministries." (Elder Cyril Miller, *Southwestern Union Record Supplement*, January 1992).

However the picture is quite different in reality, as responsible investigation reveals. It is altogether possible that some self-supporting ministries are fiscally weak or even irresponsible, but this is not true of many of the best known self-supporting ministries such as Hope International, Remnant Ministries and Hartland Institute, all of which are carefully audited annually by independent, nationally certified auditors. Their audited reports are available upon request from the respective ministries. They have Boards to which they have to render account and in the case of Hartland Institute, it has a constituency to which it must render in-depth financial reports annually.

There is a fundamental weakness in denominational auditing in that the auditors are predominantly internal, denominationally appointed auditors. The auditors are under the supervision of the various conferences, unions and the General Conference by whom they are employed. This raises the possibility that the auditors can be pressured to ignore problems or irregularities or manipulate their reports, a claim made by some auditors (e.g. the former General Conference auditor, Elder David Dennis). We must also

acknowledge that there are many men of high integrity among the auditors, accountants, treasurers and business managers in denominational employ.

Ultimately, whether supporting denominational and/or self-supporting ministries, the giver has a responsibility to be assured of the fiscal responsibility of the organization to which he is returning tithes and offerings.

It is now appropriate to offer a few general conclusions on the subject explored in this book.

1. The Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy evidence combine to leave not the slightest doubt that funds, including tithe, may be used appropriately to support faithful full-time gospel workers, be they Conference or self-supporting.
2. There is strong condemnation of those who financially support unfaithful ministers, be they Conference or self-supporting. This includes an individual as well as a corporate responsibility.
3. The principles of the New Testament do not support a single tithe channel. It is the Roman Catholic Church that claims a single channel.
4. There is a call to refrain from giving notoriety to the decision of some to give tithes and offerings directly to needy laborers involved in soul winning work in the field.
5. It needs to be remembered that for many decades the administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not in word nor practice support the single channel concept. Self-supporting ministries such as Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, Adventist Frontier Missions, Weimar Institute, Hartland Institute, 3ABN and other media ministries such as Voice of Prophecy, It Is Written, Faith for Today, Breath of Life, and many others were accepted as appropriate channels. General Conference and Conference administrators chaired the boards of some of these ministries, thus evidencing at least tacit support. It appears that it was only when self-supporting ministries arose crying aloud against apostasy, lowered standards, ecumenical associations and blasphemous worship services that the current concept that all tithe must pass

through the conference system resurfaced. Prior to the emergence of such, media and self-supporting ministries accepted millions of dollars of tithe money in addition to offerings. To the extent that these ministries were loyal in preaching the gospel message, such acceptance was within gospel order.

6. The time has come to close the chapter on the unfortunate hostility and misinformation spread concerning self-supporting work and the tithe issue.
7. The Southern Missionary Society gives us a firm basis upon which to establish at least some of the principles under which both faithful self-supporting and faithful denominational ministries can unite together, focusing upon sharing the three angels' messages with the inhabitants of our planet. But this can be achieved only when denominational representatives are committed to truth and righteousness. Neither can unsanctified self-supporting ministry contribute to such a divinely appointed plan. The Madison College experience offers further insights of divine origin.
8. Let faithful self-supporting workers and faithful Conference workers join hands together to take the everlasting gospel to the whole world. After all, we will all be self-supporting workers before the close of human probation. Some of us have simply been called a little earlier than others into the self-supporting work. When the "no buying and selling" decree is in place it will be almost impossible to carry on the denominational work as we know it today. May the Holy Spirit lead us to unified purposes now, purposes that will hasten the return of our long-looked-for Lord and Saviour.
9. Tithes and offerings are sacred unto our God. This book has been written in a sense of reverence. It is not our purpose to belittle the use of this holy means nor is this book written to diminish divinely-mandated faithful stewardship. Quite the contrary, this book has been prepared to demonstrate the fact that we should be more faithful stewards of God's means than ever before, more sacrificial and more discerning with

its use. These are the last days. We must rely more fervently upon divine instructions, and eschew non-Biblical principles as we ensure that our investment is truly in the bank of heaven.

Self-supporting ministries like the church organization will be required to render an account for every cent of God's means expended. In God's grace let us all measure up to this requirement with fidelity and wisdom under the Lord's guidance.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:19–21.