



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

# SOME LESSONS FROM HISTORY

**"Not to Know What Has  
Been Transacted in  
Former Times  
Is to Continue Always  
a Child" -- Cicero**

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It was in 1901 that Ellen G. White penned to Dr. P. T. Magan the well-known letter which indicated that "we may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel" have to remain in the wilderness following their Kadesh-barnea experience. (M-184-1901) The fact that we are still here in this world testifies amply to the verity of this prediction. Still the prophecy was prefaced with the words, "We may," not, "We will." What had happened prior to the writing of this letter, and what happened following the writing of the letter, which turned a "perhaps" into a reality?

The turmoil engendered over the message of righteousness by faith was, by 1901, a decade in the past. A new Constitution had been adopted by the General Conference earlier that year which eliminated the office of President. Union Conferences

were formed here in the States at this same session where before there were only districts under General Conference supervision. Yet with all this change, Ellen G. White wrote to the Battle Creek Church, just prior to the 1903 General Conference that "thorough work" had not been done "at the last General Conference Session." Why? "Those who have had great light have not walked in the light." "Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done, and the Holy Spirit was not imparted." (8T:104-106)

At the 1901 General Conference Session, as soon as the Conference was formally opened, Ellen G. White arose and addressed the delegates. Among other things stated, she called for "a reorganization." In the light of the fact that today, in the aftermath of the Davenport scandal, there is within the Church a growing movement to reorganize the church structure which would either eliminate the Union Conferences, or drastically alter their power and function; and the fact that among the "dissidents" there is almost total disarray due to a complete lack of "gospel order;" it is mandatory that we seek to learn some lessons from our past history and what happened which has caused us to remain these "many more years" here in this world.

What did Ellen White say in full context when she called for "a reorganization"? She spoke of "the principles of heaven." Then she stated that these principles -  
"are to be carried out in every family, in the discipline of every church, in every establishment, in every institution, in every school, and in everything that

shall be managed. You have no right to manage, unless you manage in God's order. Are you under the control of God? Do you see your responsibility to Him? If you do realize this responsibility, you will realize that you are to mold and fashion minds after a divine similitude; and then those in the different institutions here, who are being trained and educated to become workers, will work for God, to uphold the standard of righteousness.

"O my soul is drawn out in these things! Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God, are not competent to train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be, - that is past. What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle." (1901, GC Bulletin, p. 25)

While we frequently hear quoted the concept that the General Conference is no longer the voice of God to the people - and this is true - we pass over all too lightly what she said about "reorganization," as well as failing to perceive what she did not say!

First, what did Ellen G. White not say? She did not say - "What we want is no organization." Neither did she say - "What we want now is more organization." She called for "a reorganization" to begin "at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle." It is one thing to raze a structure to its foundation, and then to proclaim this fact as being in harmony with the testimony. But the call was once the superstructure was demolished, there was to be a reconstruction activity - "build upon a different principle." This was attempted at the 1901 General Conference Session, but "thorough work" was not done. It has never been done, nor even tried by "dissidents" who rightly abhor the excesses to which "more" organization following the 1903 General Session has led.

The steps outlined by the servant of the Lord in 1901 were simple. Go back to

the foundation, and then build again on a different principle. Some of the very elements which caused the "foundation" of organization to be laid in the beginning of the Movement are again very real among dissidents. There was a need in the pioneer days "for selecting, directing, and supporting a ministry; and the necessity of controlling personal ambition, [and] fanaticism. . ." The actual ordination of ministers among the early Seventh-day Adventists - even as among dissidents today - was not an immediate problem because the first ministers had been ordained already, but what caused the chief concern in the 1850's "was the problem of self-appointed preachers who went out with more zeal than ability and consecration." (SDA Encyclopedia, pp. 929-930) Commenting on this condition, James White wrote:

"God has been leading His people out of Babylon. . . It is the will of the Lord that His people be called away from man-made creeds, to enjoy the oneness and freedom of the gospel. But it is a lamentable fact that many of our Adventist brethren who made a timely escape from the bondage of the different churches, who as a body rejected the Advent doctrine, have since been in more perfect Babylon than ever before. Gospel order has been too much overlooked." (Review & Herald, Dec. 6, 1853, p. 173)

True as this was at that time, it is even more true to day. The tragedy today, that in most instances, those crying out against the confusion of "Laodicea" are in more confusion than the "Laodiceans" themselves.

Subsequently at a conference in the old church at Battle Creek, October 4-6, 1861, James White presented the following resolution which was adopted. It read:

"Resolved, That this conference recommend the following church covenant: We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name, Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Review & Herald, Oct. 9, 1861, p. 148)

There are those who once they discover this simple foundation declare to the acclaim of the dissidents - "Here is where

I stand." And it is good to stand there, but the counsel is - "build." How shall we build? - "upon a different principle" - different than was used in the building previously which brought the crisis in 1901-1903, and which has kept us here to, these "many more years."

The context of the call made by Ellen G. White at the 1901 Session was that the "principles of heaven" be recognized in every human establishment. Here is the crux of the problem. On what principles is heaven operated? In response to a lawyer's inquiry as to "which is the great commandment of the law," Jesus replied:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40)

The first principle is, there is one God to whom all created beings owe allegiance of heart, soul, and mind; and this allegiance they can give to none other.

The second principle involves relationships among the created intelligencies. The Bible is clear that each according to the assignment, or gift given, is to fulfill his required duty. In the book of Revelation, angelic ministry is by assignment. To one angel is given "power over fire" (14:18); to another charge over the waters (16:5). Even in the establishment of the Christian church, Christ gave gifts. Some were endowed to be "apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11) The success of the endeavor was based upon unified support and effort of all, each according to his capacity, even as the various organs of the human body function as a whole. But alas, the realization of this objective cannot be attained unless all are willing to recognize and accept the other according to the gifts as the Spirit has bestowed them - loving his neighbor as himself. We today have a term to describe this failure - "professional jealousy." However, the servant of the Lord said simply that the failure of the 1901 Session was - "Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done." (8T:104) The problem

is still with us.

One illustration from the 1901 Session confirms the lesson. During the discussion of the newly proposed 1901 Constitution, which was to have, not a President - one man - to head the Church, but a representative committee with a Chairman, Elder W. C. White commented:

"It is quite possible that a sentiment will be created, or a sentiment that already exists may manifest itself, that no one should be chairman of this committee for a period of more than twelve months at a time." (1901 GC Bulletin, p. 206)

However, when the report of the committee chosen, as to its organization, was read, it stated:

"Permanent Chairman - A. G. Daniells."

Such pride crystalized itself into open apostasy by the time of the 1903 Session. This Session convened in Oakland, California, on March 27, with the least number of delegates in a decade. Near the close of the session, on April 9, the Committee on Plans and Constitution brought in their report. This report was most unusual. For the first, and only time known to this writer, a majority and a minority report was brought out of committee to the floor of the Session. The majority report was simply a new Constitution which recreated the office of President of the General Conference. The minority report, signed by E. J. Waggoner, David Paulson, and P. T. Magan, read:

"The minority of your Committee on Plans and Constitution beg leave to submit that the Constitution proposed by the majority of the Committee appears to us to be so subversive of the principles of organization given to us at the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901 that we cannot possibly subscribe to it.

"The proposed new Constitution reverses the reformatory steps that were taken, and the principles which were given and adopted as the principles of reorganization, in the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901, and embodied in the present Constitution; and this before that Constitution or the organization according to it, has ever had adequate trial.

We therefore recommend that the Constitution

of 1901 be given a fair trial before it is annihilated." (1903 GC Bulletin, April 10, pp. 146-147)

As the minutes read, immediately upon the presentation of the minority report, a motion was moved and seconded that the majority report be adopted. P. T. Magan arose and stated that since the minority report dealt "with certain general vital principles, which we believe are transgressed in the proposed new constitution," he moved that the report of the minority be substituted for consideration in the place of the report of the majority. This was seconded by E. J. Waggoner, but was voted down by the delegates.

Before continuing the account of the discussion following the rejection of Magan's motion, there is an item of vital import which must be noted. Among the signatories of the majority report was W. C. White. Recall that at the 1901 Session, he had suggested an action which would have furthered the reformatory work called for by his mother. He had to be aware of what Ellen White had written to the Battle Creek Church three months earlier, that a "thorough work" had not been done in 1901. Yet in 1903, he voted with the majority to completely reverse what progress had been made in 1901 incomplete as it was. This action may cast some light on Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9. In the 1937 edition which we have available to us, there is a "Preface" written by W. C. White. He indicates that "'things new and old' are gathered together for study." But what is most disconcerting is that the statement made by Ellen G. White at the 1901 Session that the General Conference is no longer the voice of God to the people is muted in Vol. 9, and the voice of the General Conference in session is substituted. (pp. 260-261) Further the statements on tithe, its use, and how it is to be channeled as found in Vol. 9, are at variance with counsel found in Testimonies, Vol 4, and the Spalding-Magan Collection. (Compare 9T:247-251 with 4T: 464, 472; See also Spalding-Magan Collection, p. 498) This action on the part of W. C. White at the 1903 Session has not been explained as it could relate to the Daniells-Kellogg contentions, and the manipulation of the Writings in favor of Daniells in the events which followed 1903.

Following the rejection of the motion he had seconded, Waggoner obtained the floor and made some very telling observations in regard to organization and its relation to righteousness by faith. In fact, following his remarks, the minutes read, "Meeting adjourned to 2 P. M."

(From a careful reading of the minutes, it appears that both Waggoner, and Magan who spoke in the afternoon, addressed the arguments which they had faced in the committee inasmuch as no formal statements had been made by any of the members of the Committee on Plans and Constitution who had signed the majority report.)

In his dissent to the majority report, Waggoner stated:

"The first objection I have to the report is that it is fundamentally and diametrically opposed to the principles of organization as set forth in the Bible, and as, up to the present time, adhered to in the main by this body."

Waggoner then proceeded to set forth the Bible principles of organization. He noted that "the local body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, in any place, is the unit of organization and standard." The local companies, also called churches, "are simply constituent parts of the body as a whole." Because of this, he contended - "Whatever position, whatever principles, whatever features, are true of the church as a whole, are true simply because they are true locally of the bodies composing the one universal church." He told the delegates that he held these truths "to be self-evident propositions," and that "the body as a whole needs no other form of organization, and, consistently with the Scriptures, can not have any other form of organization than the local church has." He concluded his first objection by declaring - "The Bible organization is opposed to the exaltation of any person over others."

Waggoner's second objection was the proposed constitution itself, as he felt that "in some of its particulars," it was "the worst constitution ever devised among Seventh-day Adventists." But lest he be regarded as opposed to "leaders," he made himself very clear by stating:

"The Bible organization recognizes leaders;

most certainly it does. Whomsoever God appoints as leaders ought to be recognized, and will be recognized, by the body, if they are leaders indeed; for authority rests in the individual and his relation to God, and not in the position to which he is elected. And truth is truth, though it be spoken by one who has no standing or official position. And error cannot be made to be truth, or mistakes can not be made to be right, because promulgated by some one in official position, or even by the whole body; and we should recognize, and we must educate ourselves and the people to recognize, the truth of the Bible, and to be recognized by the Bible and the Spirit of God, so that whenever any case comes up for decision we have that one thing to guide us."

In concluding his comments, Waggoner emphasized -

"There is a difference between the master workman and the apprentice: The apprentice must have a plan; he must first chalk out the way in which he is going to go; he must have a pattern. The master workman has the plan, goes ahead, and does the work. Now the master workman is God, and the Spirit of God is given to lead us into all truth, not simply into what is unfortunately known as theological truth, or, better, spiritual truth, to guide us in personal conduct and morality, but given to guide us into all truth, as to administration. However many administrations there may be, there is only one Spirit, and therefore when we have that master Workman given to guide us, why shall we not voluntarily, gladly, and rejoicingly, yield to the Spirit of God, for Him to work in us all, and trust that that one Spirit can bring us back into perfect harmony and keep us there?"

This final question was not answered - the meeting was adjourned. Thus was enacted the same scene that occurred long ago, when Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Pilate did not wait for an answer; the majority of the delegates to the 1903 Session didn't want to give an answer.

When the session reconvened at 2 P.M., the same afternoon, Dr. P. T. Magan asked for the privilege of speaking "to the mat- as a whole." But before he had time to say a word, a motion to limit any one

speaker to five minutes was made and seconded. In response to this attempted "gag-rule," A. T. Jones arose and told the delegates that the presentation of this new Constitution created the "most complicated situation, in many ways, that this General Conference has ever seen." He declared that "every delegate has an inalienable right to be heard on the subject, and to be heard at whatever length he may have material to present pertinent to the question." Jones told them that he knew "it was late in the session," and because of this it was much to late to bring before the delegates such a matter as a new Constitution. He wondered out loud how anyone could conceive the idea of bringing such an issue to the session, and then seek to have it hastily "swept through." He charged that the very first thing had not been done in regard to constitutional matters. His words were:

"There has been presented to this Conference for adoption a constitution, when we already have one, and I have not heard a single word as to why the one we have is so altogether defective that we have got to have a new one, and it is so open on its face that everybody shall simply say, Amen, and let it go. I have never learned of any such proceeding as that on a constitutional question from the day of the Magna Charta until to-day."

With the tension mounting, even A. G. Daniells had to back-up, and suggested - "I would be very sorry to see this motion pass. I think that the brethren, - those who have a burden and a desire to speak, - shall be left untrammled." The motion failed to pass.

The chair then recognized P. T. Magan's request to speak to the matter as a whole. In the course of his remarks, Magan cited history as a warning of the course the proposed constitution was taking the Church. He said:

"It may be stated there is nothing in this new constitution which is not abundantly safeguarded by the provisions of it; but I want to say to you that any man who has ever read Neander's History of the Christian Church, or Mosheim's, or any other of the great church historians, - any man who has ever read those histories can come to no other conclusion but that the principles which are to be brought in through

this proposed constitution, and in the way in which they are brought in, are the same principles, and introduced in precisely the same way, as they were hundreds of years ago when the Papacy was made."

Following Magan, A. T. Jones spoke again. He had manuscripts from the pen of Ellen G. White from which he read and commented upon extensively. He quoted one testimony as follows:

"God desires that His work shall be arising, broadening, enlarging power. But the management of the work is becoming confused in itself. Not that any one wishes to be wrong or to do wrong; but the principles are wrong. These principles are so foreign to God's principles that God cannot bless those who work upon them."

Commenting, Jones said - "A man can pray himself into perdition on a wrong principle."

Historian that he ever was, Jones commented on Magan's analysis of where the proposed constitution would lead. He said:

"Brother Magan said something about church history. Please remember that was the first organization of the church. The elders met as equals. One was chosen chairman, and simply making the chairmanship perpetual is what bred the Papacy. That is the historical truth. It is proper to have a presiding officer, proper to have chairman of the meeting; but when you perpetuate that thing, and that officer begins to claim it as his right, and, if you don't elect chairman next time, feels you have dropped him, and so on, you have the spirit of the Papacy, though it is not yet developed. So I say again, that is the way the church began the chairmanship only of assembled elders, for there were a number of them; and the making of that chairmanship perpetual is what bred that which is to-day the Papacy."

In the background of this struggle was Kellogg - though not named - and his leadership in the medical missionary work. Jones alluded to this by saying - "I believe there should be no one-man power in the medical missionary work. Then he quoted again: "To the leaders in the medical missionary work, I must say that no one is to claim kingly power over God's heritage in the medical missionary work."

Jones commented - "I say, Amen; you say, Amen, for the medical missionary work." There were voices recorded as responding - "Yes for any other work." This is what Jones wanted the delegates to start thinking. He then made his point:

"Now that is best for all the conference, so come along. God's people are under Him, and Him alone. There is one Shepherd and He has one flock. "The Lord knows the future." Of course we can trust the brethren who are here now, because we are here now. But there are people coming afterward. God sees the future. He is calling us in another direction from the way this new constitution is proposed; and what I ask for is that we shall keep our eyes and our steps and our faces in that direction, and not turn back to Egypt and Babylon, which this testimony points out. Think of it, on the road toward a kingly power, "confused in itself," kingly power in the church!"

Jones' attack on the proposed constitution did not go unchallenged. Daniells himself took the floor. He revealed himself as a man of policy, though claiming to be for principle. His "confusion" was revealed by his reasoning. He said:

"Now I believe, brethren, that we must look at conditions. We face conditions, and not theories. We have to deal with what is before us, and not altogether with an ideal condition or ideal situation. When we get to heaven, we will not be doing a great many things that we are doing here. We shall have very different conditions, and we will be in an ideal state, and we can live ideally then; but while we are here in this world, and are facing conditions, we have to meet these conditions in the best way possible to carry on the work God has given us. I do not say by that that we are to sacrifice principles, or adopt wrong methods; but you may survey the whole work of the gospel, and the whole work of organization set forth in the Pentateuch, and you will see that God designed His people to carry on the work by thorough organization and discipline, such as we will not have when we get into a thoroughly ideal state with different conditions."

After Daniells completed his remarks, "Voices" called for "Elder [Geo. I.] Butler"

to speak. The tenor of his remarks was to suggest that what Waggoner, Magan, and Jones were advocating was "dissolution." To this Waggoner responded from the floor - "Oh no!" Butler kept asking J. N. Loughborough, an old veteran worker to verify his recall of the past when organization was first introduced to the church. In due course, the Chair asked Elder J. N. Loughborough to speak. He recounted the problems faced when no organization existed among the believers following the Great Disappointment in 1844. It is very evident these old pioneers were being used by the forces promoting the new constitution to discredit Jones, Waggoner and Magan. Just before the close of the afternoon session, Jones again obtained the floor, and stated:

"I would like to make a request now to all the delegation and all the people who read the Bulletin. When these speeches come out, please look at Brother Waggoner's and Brother Magan's, and then mine; read them over carefully, and if you can find anything in any one of them that strikes at organization in any sense whatever, I hope you will mark it, and send it to us, so that we can repent of it."

None of the men of the minority committee were against organization. They opposed that form of organization which would lead and has led to the formation of an hierarchy within the Church similar to a Papal form of organization. They wanted to keep the church from going in "the track of Romanism." But if their remarks in anyway could be construed as "striking at organization," they wanted to know so that they could repent. Would that such a spirit be seen among dissidents who advocate no organization.

Following the motion to adjourn, Loughborough arose, and asked to say a word in clarification. He stated:

"I am afraid a wrong impression will be carried away unless I make one or two remarks. What Brother Jones said impressed this upon my mind, and called me suddenly

to my feet. In what I said in regard to doing away with organization, I did not mean what had been said to-day was exactly like what people said years ago. I saw from Brother Jones' remark that he wanted you to read it carefully in the Bulletin. I did not say that it had been said in these speeches to-day."

The proposed constitution was adopted. In principle it remains the heart of the present Constitution of the General Conference, though greatly enlarged, and far more detailed. We have traveled "the track of Romanism" just as the concerned brethren in 1903 said was inevitable with the adoption of the proposed constitution.

Outgrowths of the Church - The SDA Reform Movement, and the German Reform Movement - operate on the same principles in their constitution adapted from the parent instrument. Good men for the most part in all the organizations, who do not want to do the wrong thing, but incapable of doing the right thing because of wrong principles; and because of these wrong principles, God cannot work with them. They are left to their own devisings.

Does this excuse the "dissidents" who interpret what Jones, Waggoner, and Magan said in the same light as those who wished to smear them at the 1903 session? No! The challenge of 1901 - "We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle" - still remains unanswered. When will it be answered? When men "humble themselves before the Lord."

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**NOTE** - For those who wish to know just how far the leadership of the Church has gone down "the track of Romanism," the documentary - Excerpts [from] Legal Briefs - EEOC vs PPPA - is a must. If you do not have a copy, order one today without delay. See the enclosed Order Form for 1984. This takes precedence over all previous order forms.

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