

Historical Background and Context for the Statement
"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget..."
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Introduction

It was December of 1892. Ellen White had arrived in Sidney harbor just 12 months before, in response to this invitation of the Foreign Mission Board of the SDA Church that was extended earlier that year:

That *Whereas*, In our judgment it would be a great blessing to the cause in Australia and adjacent colonies for Sister White to visit that field; therefore,
Resolved, That we hereby invite her to do so, as soon as the coming autumn, if her own judgment, and the light she may have in the matter shall be in accordance with this request; it being understood that W. C. White shall accompany her on this visit.¹

The issues that led to her "visit" were rooted in the events that transpired over the previous four years, swirling around and out of the Minneapolis experience.² The "incomprehensible tug of war"³ of that event would have fallout, consequences that we are still living with over 120 years later. One result appears to have been a questioning of church organization, with even Ellen White making her only statement on record of hoping there "would not be the necessity for another coming out."⁴

The work of Seventh-day Adventists in Australia had begun just seven years earlier.⁵ As the year 1892 neared its end, the Australian churches were conducting their business gathering, and the world church was planning its General Conference meetings back in the USA. We pick up the story in Arthur White's biography of his grandmother.

Arthur White's Review of the Setting

During the ten-day session of the Australian Conference Ellen White's mind was much on North America and the forthcoming General Conference session, to be held in Battle Creek from February 17 to March 7. Preceding this would be a three-week institute, which would be attended by most of the delegates to the session and scores of ministers, colporteur leaders, Bible instructors, and laymen. The two gatherings, each three weeks long, were so closely related that a

¹ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891, p. 256.38 & 39. The page and paragraph references in these footnotes follow the reference methods used on the *Ellen G. White Comprehensive Research Edition* CD-ROM, 2008 (as well as online at EGWWritings.org).

² These have been most completely documented in *The Return of the Latter Rain*, Ron Duffield, Fourth Angel Publishers, 2010 (3rd Edition). Ellen White would address the core reason in a letter to the General Conference President O. A. Olsen, four years later, December 1, 1896 (*1888* p. 1622.1 & 2).

³ *1888* p. 182.2 (November 4, 1888)

⁴ *1888* p. 356.4 (June 1889); "coming out" was in the context of the early Adventists who "had come out of the denominational churches." When this statement was published in *Last Day Events*, the EGW Estate editors added this comment: "This is the only known statement from the pen of Ellen White indicating that she might have lost confidence in the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization. The doubt which she expressed here was never repeated during the remaining twenty-six years of her life." (p. 48.1).

⁵ *Ellen G. White*, Volume 4, The Australian Years, 1891-1900, Arthur L. White, p. 12 [4BIO 12.4]

separation can hardly be made. The General Conference Bulletin for 1893 carried full reports of both in its 524 double-column pages.

The president of the General Conference, O. A. Olsen, was in frequent correspondence with W. C. White, who represented the General Conference as the superintendent of District Number 7, which comprised all of Australasia. On November 1, 1892, Olsen wrote to him concerning some proposals being made by certain key workers in the field that called for dismantling certain phases of organization of the church. His letter stated:

Now about the matter, or rather, question, of organization.

... I have had some fears that this question might come up and take a shape in the coming General Conference that much precious time would be wasted in discussing something that was not practical. ... I received a letter from Elder Holser after he had been with Dr. [E. J.] Waggoner on that tour in Scandinavia that gave me some uneasiness. Others, too, have written and spoken in a way that has given me the idea that this matter was being discussed at some considerable length in some places. But I think that the question can be kept within proper limits.--O. A. Olsen to WCW, Nov. 1, 1892.

At issue was a greater centralization of the work and the elimination of some familiar features. This would involve turning from "plans of working that the Lord has seen fit to bless."

W. C. White shared his letter with his mother, as was fully expected by Olsen. On December 19 she wrote a fifteen-page communication titled "Organization." The entire communication dealt with the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On its first page, Ellen White reminded church leaders that she knew the history well from firsthand contact:

It is nearly forty years since organization was introduced among us as a people. I was one of the number who had an experience in establishing it from the first. I know the difficulties that had to be met, the evils which it was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point, and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered.

From the first, our work was aggressive. Our numbers were few, and mostly from the poorer class. Our views were almost unknown to the world. We had no houses of worship, [and] but few publications and very limited facilities for carrying forward our work. The sheep were scattered in the highways and byways, in cities, in towns, in forests. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus was our message.

She then wrote of the inception of the various enterprises that were developed within the church, the educational work, and the establishment of health institutions, "both for the health and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment to others." She asked,

What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard

seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization proved a grand success.

She decried situations in which the machinery had become too complicated and conference sessions at times "burdened down with propositions and resolutions that were not at all essential." This, she pointed out, was an argument against, not organization, but the perversion of it.

It was in this setting she penned the unforgettable words:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, "Praise God!" As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ our Leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.--Letter 32, 1892.

President Olsen chose to present this message at the very opening of the institute, bringing it before the assembly of some three hundred workers and visitors on Sunday afternoon, January 29. As Olsen presented Ellen White's letter to the workers gathered at the institute, he broached the question of an administrative organization that would serve between the local conference, missions, and organizations, and the General Conference, thus planting the seeds for the union conference plan that was adopted in 1901. "What can be the objection," he asked, "to organizing district conferences? ... It would seem that the problem of unity of effort in many distant fields, such as Australasia, South America, et cetera, could not be solved so well in any other way as to provide such fields with district conferences."--GCB 1893, pp. 24, 25.

Some months later Ellen White referred to this subject. She wrote:

Elder Waggoner has entertained ideas, and without waiting to bring his ideas before a council of brethren, has agitated strange theories. He has brought before some of the people ideas in regard to organization that ought never to have had expression.

I supposed that the question of organization was settled forever with those who believed the testimonies given through Sister White. Now if they believed the testimonies, why do they work contrary to them? Why should not my brethren be prudent enough to place these matters before me, or at least to enquire if I had any light upon these subjects?

Why is it that these things start up at this time when we have canvassed the matter in our previous history, and God has spoken upon these subjects? Should not that be enough? Why not keep steadily at work in the lines that God has given us? Why not walk in the clear light He has revealed in place of tearing to pieces that which God has built up?--Letter 37, 1894.⁶

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61 [4BIO 59.1 to 61.5]. Letter 32, 1892 is the letter under consideration in this document; it was addressed to "Dear Brethren of the General Conference" and is reproduced in full in this document. The final letter quoted, Letter 37, 1894 was addressed to A. T. Jones, January 14, 1894; this extract can be found in 14MR 202.1 & 2. (The entire letter is not in the current published EGW material.)

O. A. Olsen's Comments

The presentation mentioned above "on Sunday afternoon, January 29" by O. A. Olsen is recorded as follows in the *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, with the original heading.

SUBJECT - ORGANIZATION

THE subject considered in the afternoon council was that of organization, its object and importance. Elder Olsen made remarks and read from the testimonies recently received touching this matter. He said that next to the importance of having the Holy Spirit of God with us in our work, is that of proper organization. Union is strength; confusion is weakness. In all the work of God, the most perfect order is manifest, and from the instruction which we as a people have received both from the Bible and from the experience of those who have been connected with the work of God from the first, the importance of organization is fully demonstrated.

The object of organization, he said, is to secure efficiency in the work, also to so divide up the work and responsibilities that no one will be overburdened, while others are carrying nothing. As a people we have from first to last received very much instruction on these points, but we have not always been able to apply these principles so as to receive all the profit that should come to us. Since the last season of the General Conference the idea has gained ground to some extent that it might be well to drop some of our organizations that have been established in connection with present truth. He expressed himself as having felt some anxiety over this matter, for he was sure that the Lord had given direct instruction to this people on the question of organization, and that it would not be to the glory of God to entertain any idea of disorganization. We have, no doubt, made a mistake in relying too much on form, and in not giving proper importance to vital godliness and thorough Christian experience. He stated that at one time he feared that this question would come up in a shape that would not result for the best, but we are glad to say that our fears in this respect have been relieved. But he said we have received instruction bearing on these subjects which he would place before the brethren, and which he believed would set this subject in such a light as to relieve us from any embarrassment, and show us what attitude to take in reference to this important question.

He first read a short extract from a pamphlet written by Elder James White in the year 1873, entitled, "An Earnest Appeal," as it seemed so plain and explicit, he said, and placed before us the way in which this subject was regarded by the pioneers in our work. Following is the extract:-

"With Seventh-day Adventists, organization was not so much a matter of choice as of necessity. It was first entered into very cautiously by some, and reluctantly by others. And as numbers have increased, and missionary fields have opened before us, we have all come to prize our simple, and, to human view, complete organization. The history of our cause bears a decided testimony in favor of our system of organization. The men who framed it, and introduced it, felt the importance of their work. The guiding Hand was with them, which is the reason why the lapse of more than ten years has not revealed defects demanding changes. We unhesitatingly

express our firm convictions that organization with us was by the direct providence of God. And to disregard our organization is an insult to God's providential dealings with us, and a sin of no small magnitude.

"The permanency of the cause, and united effort of all our people to push the work forward, depends upon the establishment and maintenance of order. And this cannot be done without proper organization. But organization exists only in form when the offices of such organization are trampled under foot.

Our General Conference is the highest earthly authority with our people, and is designed to take charge of the entire work in this and other countries. The officers of our State Conferences, and also those of our institutions located at Battle Creek, are expected to respect our General Conference Committee as the men appointed to take the general supervision of the cause in all its branches and interests. They should be regarded as the safest counselors, and the proper persons to give advice in all important matters.

One or more of the General Conference Committee should be present at each State Conference, and should take part in all deliberations and counsels, especially in licensing men to improve their gifts in teaching the word of God, and auditing accounts, and settling with ministers. These men who labor from State to State, and have their minds exercised with matters pertaining to the general wants and dangers of the cause, are far better qualified to judge of the local wants of State Conferences than their own officers possibly can be. - Pages 12,13,14.

Following this, he read from a recent testimony on "Formality, not Organization, an Evil," the following:-

Evil does not result from organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the pre-eminence, and a laborious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done in simplicity, evil will result, and little will be accomplished in proportion to the effort put forth. The object of organization is just the reverse of this; and should we disorganize, it would be like tearing down that we might build up. Evil results have been seen both in the Sabbath-school work and in the missionary society because of making much of machinery, while vital experience was lost sight of. In many of the imagined improvements that have been brought in, the mould of man has been placed upon the work.

In the Sabbath-school men and women have been accepted as officers and teachers, who have not been spiritually minded, and have had no live interest in the work committed to their care; but matters can be set in order only through the aid of the Holy Spirit. The same evil has existed for years as now exists in our churches. Formality, pride, and love of display have taken the place of true piety and humble godliness. We might see a different order of things should a number consecrate themselves wholly to God, and then devote their talents to the Sabbath-school work, ever advancing in knowledge, and educating themselves so that they would be

able to train others as to the best methods to employ in the work; but it is not for the workers to seek for methods by which they can make a display, consuming time in theatrical performances, and musical display; for this benefits no one. It does no good to train the children to make speeches for special occasions. They should be won to Christ, and instead of expending time, money, effort to make display, let the whole effort be made to gather sheaves for the harvest.

Many seem to have thought that all that was essential in Sabbath-school work was to organize the school, and drill the scholars so that they would act in harmony with a set of ceremonies and forms, and that if persons could be secured as teachers, the Sabbath-school would run itself. Teachers are often secured who cannot lead souls to Christ, because they know not what it is to find him precious to their own souls; but all those who do not value the soul so that they will work as Christ would have them, will scatter away from Christ. "He that [mark these words], gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." If teachers have no burden to lead souls to Jesus, they will grow indifferent to the truth, they will become careless, and the atmosphere with which they surround their souls will work to scatter away from Christ. And with such elements in the Sabbath-school, there will be perpetual conflicts with difficulties; for when the teachers engage in the work and have no interest in it, the pupils will partake of the same spirit.

But although these difficulties exist, will it abolish them to put an end to organization? I am sure that the Lord has wrought in the organization that has been perfected, and the fact that there are discouraging features in the work, should not be thought a sufficient reason for disorganization. Much light was given to us in reference to the organization of churches, but the victory was gained at last, and now shall the church be disorganized because of indifference, formality and pride? Shall we go back to disorder because unconsecrated members of the church have placed upon the church the mould of man, and sought to fashion the church to meet a popular standard?"

This was much to the point, but he said only last week he received the following communication from Sister White, bearing directly upon this subject:-⁷

Letter 32, 1893 of Ellen White

What followed next in the *General Conference Daily Bulletin* was the entire document which is indexed as Letter 32, 1892. It will be noted that in it Ellen White

⁷ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29, 1893 pp. 20.7 to 21.11. The pamphlet of James White that was quoted, *An Earnest Appeal*, is available in his collection in the "Words of the Adventist Pioneers" on the *Ellen G. White Comprehensive Research Edition* CD-ROM (as well as online at EGWwritings.org in his collection under the section Adventist Pioneer Library, and in e-book form in his collection at AdventAudio.org). This pamphlet had a subtitle, "To the General Conference Committee, the 'Picked Men' at Battle Creek, the Committees of the State Conferences, and the Officers of the Several Branches of our Tract and Missionary Society." The other testimony, "Formality, not Organization, an Evil" can be found in CE 134.1 to 135.2 and FE 253.1 to 254.2. The CE source appears to be the first publication of this, dated the same year as the GC Session, 1893.

quoted from several previous testimonies that were pertinent. The current sources of these are inserted in brackets. The formatting in the original *Bulletin* seems to reveal some inconsistencies, both in font size and enclosing quotes, that tend to confuse the reader in regard to which sections were freshly written, and which were quotations of previous testimonies. But two things do seem clear. First, that when she did quote previous material, she referenced it. And secondly, that the material between the greeting line, "Dear Brethren of the General Conference" and her name at the end, "Ellen G. White" comprises the letter, and that only the two paragraphs following her name (not included here) were Olsen's closing comments (which Arthur White quoted from in the above extract, in mentioning his comments on "district conferences.") Thus the quotes marks that were around the last eight paragraphs in the original of what follows have been removed. The well-know phrase, "we have nothing to fear for the future" is found in the fourth paragraph from the end, which begins, "The work is soon to close...."

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, DEC. 19, 1892

Dear Brethren of the General Conference:-

I learn that it is proposed by some of our brethren to do away with the organization of some at least of the branches of our work. No doubt what has led them to propose this step is that in some of our organizations the machinery has been made so complicated as really to hinder the work. This, however, is not an argument against organization, but against the perversion of it.

It is nearly forty years since organization was introduced among us as a people. I was one of the number who had an experience in establishing it from the first. I know the difficulties that had to be met, the evils which it was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point; and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered.

From the first our work was aggressive. Our numbers were few, and mostly from the poorer class. Our views were almost unknown to the world. We had no houses of worship, but few publications, and very limited facilities for carrying forward our work. The sheep were scattered in the highways and byways, in cities, in towns, in forests. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus was our message.

"Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." [1 Cor. 1:26-31]

Our numbers gradually increased. The seed that was sown was watered of God, and he gave the increase. At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in

barns, in groves, and in school houses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship. As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization, there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.

Yet there was strong feeling against it among our people. The First-day Adventists were opposed to organization, and most of the Seventh-day Adventists entertained the same ideas. We sought the Lord with earnest prayer that we might understand his will, and light was given by his Spirit, that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church, that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth.

In a Testimony first published in 1859, in regard to systematic benevolence, are these words:-

"There is order in heaven, and God is pleased with the efforts of his people in trying to move with system and order in his work on earth. I saw that there should be order in the church of God, and that system is needed in carrying forward successfully the last great message of mercy to the world." - Test. for the Church, vol. 1, p. 191. [1T 191.1; original Testimony No. 5]

Again I quote from Testimony No. 6, on another point:-

"As we near the close of time, Satan comes down with great power, knowing that his time is short. Especially will his power be exercised upon the remnant. He will war against them and seek to divide and scatter them, that they may grow weak, and be overthrown. The people of God should move understandingly, and should be united in their efforts. They should be of the same mind, of the same judgment; then their efforts will not be scattered, but will tell forcibly in the upbuilding of the cause of present truth. Order must be observed, and there must be union in maintaining order, or Satan will take the advantage.

"I saw that the enemy would come in every way possible to dishearten the people of God and perplex and trouble them, and that they should move understandingly, and prepare themselves for the attacks of Satan. Matters pertaining to the church should not be left in an unsettled condition. Steps should be taken to secure church property for the cause of God, that the work may not be retarded in its progress, and that the means which persons wish to dedicate to God's cause may not slip into the enemy's ranks. I saw that God's people should act wisely, and leave nothing undone on their part to place the business of the church in a secure state. Then after all is done that they can do, they should trust the Lord to overrule these things for them, that Satan take no advantage of God's remnant people. It is Satan's time to work. A stormy future is before us; and the church should be awake to make an advance move that they may

stand securely against his plans. It is time that something was done. God is not pleased to have the matters of the church at loose ends, and suffer the enemy to have the whole advantage and control affairs as best pleases him." - Vol. I, pp. 210,211. [1T 210.2&3]

The following were published from 1862 to 1868:-

"Unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments. Previous teachings have nourished the elements of disunion. A spirit has been cherished to watch and accuse, rather than to build up. If ministers of God would unitedly take their position, and maintain it with decision, there would be a uniting influence among the flock of God. Separating bars would be broken to fragments. Hearts would flow together and unite like drops of water. Then there would be a power and strength in the ranks of Sabbath-keepers far exceeding anything we have yet witnessed.

"The hearts of God's servants are made sad as they journey from church to church, by meeting the opposing influence of other opposing ministering brethren. There are those who have stood ready to oppose every advance step that God's people have taken. The hearts of those who have dared to venture out are saddened and distressed by the lack of union of action on the part of their fellow-laborers. We are living in a solemn time. Satan and evil angels are working with mighty power, with the world on their side to help them. And professed Sabbath-keepers who claim to believe solemn, important truth, unite their forces with the combined influence of the powers of darkness to distract and tear down that which God designs to build up. The influence of such is recorded as of those who retard the advance reform among God's people." - Vol. 1, p. 270. [1T 270.2 & 271.1; from original Testimony No. 7; note that there the final phrase is "the advancement of reform among God's people"; first penned August 1861 according to 1T 270.2 and RH, August 27, 1861 par. 2]

"There are many restless spirits who will not submit to discipline, system, and order. They think that their liberties would be abridged were they to lay aside their own judgment and submit to the judgment of those of experience. The work of God will not progress unless there is a disposition to submit to order, and expel the reckless, disorderly spirit of fanaticism from their meetings." - Vol. 1, p. 413. [1T 413.1; from original Testimony No. 10]

"Ministers should love order, and should discipline themselves, and then they can successfully discipline the church of God and teach them harmoniously, like a well-drilled company of soldiers. If discipline and order are necessary for successful action in the battle field, the same are as much more needful in the warfare in which we are engaged, as the object to be gained is of greater value and more elevated in character, than those for which opposing forces contend on the field of battle. In the conflict in which we are engaged, eternal interests are at stake.

"Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire to co-operate with the heavenly messengers, must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high, will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God will co-operate with them. But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy our courage, and prevent successful action.

"Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God, and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united, and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently, they will not take any man's say so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it was Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it was God's order for them to strike out for themselves, and choose their own course, independent of their brethren.

"I was pointed back to the children of Israel. Very soon after leaving Egypt they were organized and most thoroughly disciplined. God had, in his special providence, qualified Moses to stand at the head of the armies of Israel. He had been a mighty warrior to lead the armies of the Egyptians, and in generalship he could not be surpassed by any man. The Lord did not leave his holy tabernacle to be borne indiscriminately by any tribe that might choose. He was so particular as to specify the order he would have observed in bearing the sacred ark, and to designate a special family of the Levites to bear it. When it was for the good of the people and the glory of God, that they should pitch their tents in a certain place, God signified his will to them by causing the pillar of cloud to rest directly over the tabernacle, where it remained until he would have them journey again. In all their journeyings they were required to observe perfect order. Every tribe bore a banner with the sign of their father's house upon it, and each tribe was required to pitch under its own standard. When the ark moved,

the armies journeyed, the different tribes marching in order, under their own standards. The Levites were designated by the Lord as the tribe in the midst of whom the sacred ark was to be borne, Moses and Aaron marching just in front of the ark, and the sons of Aaron following near them, each bearing trumpets. They were to receive directions from Moses, which they were to signify to the people by speaking through the trumpets. These trumpets gave special sounds which the people understood, and they directed their movements accordingly.

"A special signal was first given by the trumpeters to call the attention of the people; then all were to be attentive, and obey the certain sound of the trumpets. There was no confusion of sound in the voices of the trumpets, therefore there was no excuse for confusion in movements. The head officers of each company gave definite directions in regard to the movements they were required to make, and none who gave attention were left in ignorance of what they were to do. If any failed to comply with the requirements given by the Lord to Moses, and by Moses to the people, they were punished with death. It would be no excuse to plead that they knew not the nature of these requirements, for they would only prove themselves willingly ignorant, and would receive the just punishment for their transgression. If they did not know the will of God concerning them, it was their fault. They had the same opportunities to obtain the knowledge imparted as others of the people had, therefore their sin of not knowing, not understanding, was as great in the sight of God as if they had heard and then transgressed.

"The Lord designated a special family of the tribe of Levi to bear the ark; and others of the Levites were specially appointed of God to bear the tabernacle and all its furniture, and to perform the work of setting up and taking down the tabernacle. And if any man from curiosity, or from lack of order, got out of his place, and touched any part of the sanctuary or furniture, or even came near any of the workmen, he was to be put to death. God did not leave his holy tabernacle to be borne, erected, and taken down indiscriminately, by any tribe who might choose the office, but persons were chosen who could appreciate the sacredness of the work in which they were engaged.

"Has God changed from a God of order? No; he is the same in the present dispensation as in the former. Paul says, 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.' He is as particular now as then. And he designs that we should learn lessons of order and organization from the perfect order instituted in the days of Moses for the benefit of the children of Israel." - Vol. I, pp. 649-653. [1T 649.1 to 1T 652.3, with portions 652.1 and 652.3, and all of 652.2 deleted; from original Testimony No. 14]

The Lord has continued to give light from time to time in regard to the importance of maintaining order. Reproofs and warnings have been given to those who started out to labor according to their own judgment, feeling that they were amenable to no one, and having no regard to the general interest of the cause of God. Physicians who practiced among the churches have been reprov'd for their

course in establishing themselves wherever they pleased, and working according to their own judgment from a selfish stand-point. I have been shown that physicians who practice in our churches should come under the supervision of the churches as fully as the minister. If they do not maintain strict integrity, it is the duty of the churches to labor with them according to the instruction of the word of God. And the direction that Christ has given in Matt. 18 concerning our duty to those who fall into error and sin, reveals the fact that there is to be thorough organization in the church.

We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. Notwithstanding that the Lord gave testimony after testimony upon this point, the opposition was strong, and it had to be met again and again. But we knew that the Lord God of Israel was leading us, and guiding by his providence. We engaged in the work of organization, and marked prosperity attending this advance movement. As the development of the work called us to engage in new enterprises, we were prepared to enter upon them. The Lord directed our minds to the importance of educational work. We saw the need of schools that our children might receive instruction, free from the errors of false philosophy, that their training might be in harmony with the principles of the word of God. The need of health institutions had been urged upon us, both for the help and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment of others. This enterprise also was carried forward. All this was missionary work of the highest order. Our work was not sustained by large gifts and legacies; for we have few wealthy men among us. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the order of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan. The body "has been compacted by that which every joint supplieth." As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual.

In some parts of the work it is true, the machinery has been made too complicated; especially has this been the case in the tract and missionary work; the multiplication of rules and regulations made it needlessly burdensome. An effort should be made to simplify the work, so as to avoid all needless labor and perplexity.

The business of our Conference session has sometimes been burdened down with propositions and resolutions that were not at all essential, and that would never have been presented if the sons and daughters of God had been walking carefully and prayerfully before him. The fewer rules and regulations that we can have, the better will be the effect in the end. When they are made, let them be carefully considered, and, if wise, let it be seen that they mean something, and are not to become a dead letter. Do not, however, encumber any branch of the work with unnecessary, burdensome restrictions and inventions of men. In this period of the world's history with the vast work that is before us, we need to observe the greatest simplicity, and the work will be stronger for its simplicity.

Let none entertain the thought, however, that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study, and many prayers for wisdom that we

know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by his direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord, I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled. At God's command, "Go forward," we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past, which has made us as a people what we are. Then let every one be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing his cause.

The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant. In reviewing our past history, having travelled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as Leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. We are now a strong people, if we will put our trust in the Lord; for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for. If we walk in the light as it shines upon us from the living oracles of God, we shall have large responsibilities, corresponding to the great light given us of God. We have many duties to perform, because we have been made the depositories of sacred truth to be given to the world in all its beauty and glory. We are debtors to God to use every advantage he has entrusted to us to beautify the truth of holiness of character, and to send the message of warning, and of comfort, of hope and love, to those who are in the darkness of error and sin.

Thank God for what has already been done in providing for our youth facilities for religious and intellectual training. Many have been educated to act a part in the various branches of the work, not only in America but in foreign fields. The press has furnished literature that has spread far and wide the knowledge of the truth. Let all the gifts that like rivulets have swelled the stream of benevolence be recognized as a cause of thanksgiving to God.

We have an army of youth to-day who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor.

We are still free to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. As the disciples of Christ it is our duty to diffuse light which we know that the world has not. Let the people of God be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

ELLEN G. WHITE.⁸

⁸ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29, 1893 pp. 22.1 to 24.8. According to Arthur White's references to it, the original letter comprised 15 pages, was entitled "Organization," and was indexed as Letter 32, 1892. It should be noted that in the current EGW electronic collection, this document does not

Closing Observations

It should be confessed that there is nothing new under the sun, and that the counsels of the 1860s that were desperately needed 30 years later in the confusion that developed after Minneapolis, are still needed now in the confusion that reigns in our midst some 120 years later. The deception of seeing order as a popery that restricts liberty was realized not only in the experience of A. T. Jones as he ventured on a path made possible only because he was not being sanctified by the truth he was handling,⁹ but also can be seen in the cases of certain today who see danger in those calling for order. How many "lone rangers" do we have, limiting the work God could do through them by their ungodly independence, though at times making league with others so like minded, to further the cause of "liberty."

Godly order is the solution to both dangers of selfish independence and of human control. If every heart is in touch with the Captain of their salvation, true order will be seen. No human will dictate the course of others, but there will be leaders granted delegated responsibilities, serving as Jesus served. Order will be desired, sought for, prayed for, not as goal in itself, but as the blessed fruit of a faith that works by love.

Order will be possible only with the submission that the Godhead models, with their selflessness that Jesus revealed to us, with the abhorrence of disorder and its devastating, diabolical, and deadly consequences. Such submission, selflessness, and abhorrence are only possible by hearts renewed daily. Order then comes from each listening to the direction of their Captain, sensitive to the Spirit's promptings. And only with such order will the completion of Adventism's mission be possible.

Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world. {AA 90.2}

appear in it entirety. There are two portions of it published under the Periodicals section, within the General Conference Daily Bulletin. These are the second two of the three articles thus published with the date of January 29, 1893. The apparent reason for this method of selection two portions of the letter for the electronic collection was because of the desire not to republish the extensive quoting of previous testimonies. But in so doing, the last paragraph on page 23 (23.8) was left out of the electronic collections, the paragraph above that begins, "The Lord has continued to give light from time to time....," a paragraph that has significant observations and implications for our day.

⁹ 11MR 209.3 (Letter 215, 1902, May 7, 1902)