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Every administrator should read again
the counsel from the Lord's Messenger

E.G. White Research Center
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Ellen G. White SPEAKS to CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS*

The Lord has been pleased to present before me many things in regard to the calling and labor of our ministers, especially those who have been appointed as presidents of conferences. Great care should be exercised in the selection of men for these positions of trust. There should be earnest prayer for divine enlightenment.

Those who are thus appointed as overseers of the flock should be men of good repute: men who give evidence that they have not only a knowledge of the Scriptures, but an experience in faith, in patience, that in meekness they may instruct those who oppose the truth. They should be men of thorough integrity, not novices, but intelligent students of the Word, able to teach others also, bringing from the treasurehouse things new and old; men who in character, in words, in deportment, will be an honor to the cause of Christ, reaching the truth, living the truth, growing up to the full stature in Christ Jesus. This means the development and strengthening of every faculty by exercise, that the workers may become qualified to bear large responsibilities as the work increases.

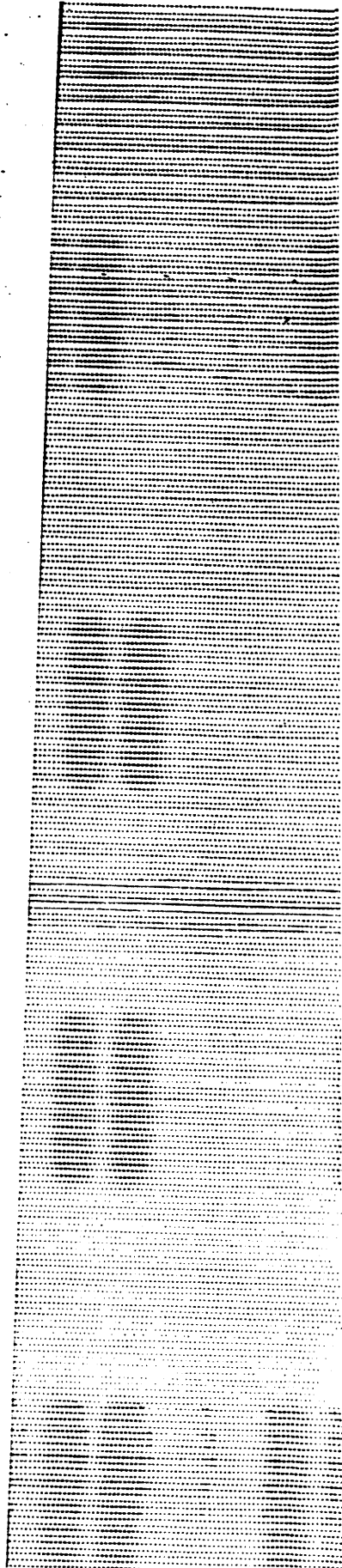
The Lord Jesus connected Judas and Peter with Himself, not because they were defective in character, but notwithstanding their defects. He would give them an opportunity to learn in His school, meekness and lowliness of heart, that they might come co-laborers with Him. And if they would improve these opportunities, if they would be willing to learn, willing to see their deficiencies, and in the light of a pure example to become all that Christ would give them, then they would be a great blessing to the church.

Thus the Lord Jesus is still dealing with men. Some who are imperfect in character are connected with solemn, sacred interests; and when chosen for a special work, they should not feel that their own wisdom is sufficient, that they need not be counseled, reproved, and instructed. Brethren, if you feel thus, you will separate from the Source of your strength, and will be in peril. You may be left to your own supposed sufficiency, to do as Judas did,—betray your Lord. . . .

Needed—Hard-thinking and Earnest, Praying Presidents

Some of our conferences are weak in Christian experience because their leading men—and the people have followed their example—have sought for the approval of man with far greater anxiety than for the approval of God. They have looked to man for help and counsel more than to God. They have made men their burden-bearers, and have accepted human wisdom just when and where they should have depended upon God. And too often those of whom they sought counsel needed help themselves; for their souls were not right with God. The presidents of our conferences have become weak and inefficient by making flesh their arm. Trust in the wisdom of man does not facilitate growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

Brethren, when perplexities arise in your conference, when emergencies are to be met, do not let these dark clouds drift into the General Conference if you can possibly avoid it. The president of the General Conference should not be burdened with the affairs of the State conferences, as has



been the case in the past. If you, with your associates in the work, cannot adjust the troubles and difficulties that arise in your conference, how do you think that one man can do this work for all the conferences? Why should you pour all your perplexities and discouragements into the burdened mind and heart of the president of the General Conference? He cannot understand the situation as well as you do who are on the ground. If you shirk responsibility and crosses and burden-bearing, hard thinking and earnest praying, and look to the president of the General Conference to do your work and help you out of your difficulties, cannot you see that you lay upon him burdens that will imperil his life? Have you not mind and ability as well as he? You should not neglect any part of the work because it calls for earnest, cross-bearing effort.

I repeat, Do not throw your burdens upon the president of the General Conference. Do not expect him to take up your dropped stitches and bind off your work. Resolve that you will bear your own burdens through Christ who strengthens you.

The president of the General Conference, if he is walking in the counsel of God, will not encourage his brethren to look to him to define their duty, but will direct them to the only Source that is untainted with the errors of humanity. He will refuse to be . . . conscience for others. . . .

The one who is the object of this undue confidence is exposed to strong temptations. Satan will, if possible, lead him to be self-confident, in order that human defects may mar the work. He will be in danger of encouraging his brethren in their dependence upon him, and of feeling that all things that pertain to the movements of the cause must be brought to his notice. Thus the work will bear the impress of man instead of the impress of God.

But if all will learn to depend upon God for themselves, many dangers that assail the one who stands at the head of the work will be averted. If he errs, if he permits human influence to sway his judgment, or yields to temptation, he can be corrected and helped by his brethren. And those who learn to go to God for themselves for help and counsel, are learning lessons that will be of the highest value to them.

Pray and Labor—Labor and Pray

If the officers of a conference would bear

successfully the burdens laid upon them, they must pray, they must believe, they must trust God to use them as His agents in keeping the churches of the conference in good working order. This is their part of the vineyard to cultivate. There must be far more personal responsibility, far more thinking and planning, far more mental power brought into the labor put forth for the Master. This would enlarge the capacity of the mind, and give keener perceptions as to what to do and how.

Brethren, you will have to wrestle with difficulties, carry burdens, give advice, plan and execute, constantly looking to God for help. Pray and labor . . . as pupils in the school of Christ, learn of Jesus.

The Lord has given us the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another, and to pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart. Talk less: much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally. Make known your troubles to God. Tell Him, as did Moses, "I cannot lead this people unless Thy presence shall go with me." And then ask still more: pray with Moses, "Show me Thy glory." What is this glory?—The character of God. This is what He proclaimed to Moses.

Let the soul in living faith fasten upon God. Let the tongue speak His praise. When you associate together, let the mind be reverently turned to the contemplation of eternal realities. Thus you will be helping one another to be spiritually minded. When your will is in harmony with the divine will, you will be in harmony with one another; you will have Christ by your side as a counselor.

Enoch walked with God. So may every laborer for Christ. You may say with the psalmist, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." While you feel that you have no sufficiency of yourself, your sufficiency will be in Jesus. If you expect all your counsel and wisdom to come from men, mortal and finite like yourselves, you will receive only human help. If you go to God for help and wisdom, He will never disappoint your faith.

THE MINISTRY

Same God for Local and General Presidents

The presidents of the State conferences have the same God that the president of the General Conference has, and they may go to the Source of wisdom for themselves, instead of depending upon one man, who has to obtain his light from the same source.

It may be argued that the Lord gives special wisdom to those entrusted with important responsibilities. True, if they walk humbly with Him, He will give them help for their work; and He will give you help for yours, if you seek it in the same spirit. If the Lord in His providence has placed important responsibilities upon you, He will fit you to bear these burdens, if you go to Him in faith for strength to do this. When you put your trust in Him, and depend upon His counsel, He will not leave you to your own finite judgment, to make imperfect plans and decided failures.

Make No Man Your Confessor

Every one needs a practical experience in trusting God for himself. Let no man become your confessor; open the heart to God; tell Him every secret of the soul. Bring to Him your difficulties, small and great, and He will show you a way out of them all. He alone can know how to give you the very help you need.

And when, after a trying season, help comes to you, when the Spirit of God is manifestly at work for you, what a precious experience you gain! You are obtaining faith and love, the gold that the True Witness counsels you to buy of Him. You are learning to go to God in all your troubles; and as you learn these precious lessons of faith, you will teach the same to others. Thus you may be continually leading the people to a higher plane of experience.

The president of a State conference is, in his manner of dealing, educating the ministers under him, and together they can educate the churches that it will not be necessary to call the ministers of the conference from the field to settle difficulties and dissensions in the church. If the officers of the conference will, as faithful servants, perform their Heaven-appointed duties, the work in our conferences will not be apt to become entangled in such perplexities as heretofore. And in laboring thus, the workers will become solid, responsible men,

who will not fail nor be discouraged in a hard place.

There is One who is mighty to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. Is not the promise broad and full, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Why are we so unwilling to come directly to the Source of our strength? Have we not departed from the Lord in this? Should not our ministers and the presidents of our conferences learn whence cometh their help? . . .

A Change of Laborers

The question is asked me if it is not a mistake to remove the president of a State conference to a new field when many of the people under his present charge are unwilling to give him up.

The Lord has been pleased to give me light on this question. I have been shown that ministers should not be retained in the same district year after year, nor should the same man long preside over a conference. A change of gifts is for the good of our conferences and churches.

Ministers have sometimes felt unwilling to change their field of labor; but if they understood all the reasons for making changes, they would not draw back. Some have pleaded to remain one year longer in the same field, and frequently the request has been respected. They have claimed to have plans for accomplishing a greater work than heretofore. But at the close of the year there was a worse state of things than before. If a minister has been unfaithful in his work, it is not likely that he will mend the matter by remaining. The churches become accustomed to the management of that one man, and think they must look to him instead of to God. His ideas and plans have a controlling power in the conference.

The people may see that he errs in judgment, and because of this they learn to place a low estimate upon the ministry. If they would look to God, and depend upon heavenly wisdom, they would be gaining an experience of the highest value, and would themselves be able, in many respects at least, to supply what is lacking in him who is the overseer of the flock. But too often things are left to drift as they will, the president being held responsible for the condition of the churches in the conference, while the church members settle

down, indifferent, lukewarm, doing nothing to bring things into order.

Change Needed for Both the Weak and the Strong

The president may not feel the importance of sanctifying himself, that others may be sanctified. He may be an unfaithful watchman, preaching to please the people. Many are strong in some points of character, while they are weak and deficient in others. As the result, a want of efficiency is manifest in some parts of the work. Should the same man continue as president of a conference year after year, his defects would be reproduced in the churches under his labors. But one laborer may be

strong where his brother is weak, and so by exchanging fields of labor, one may, to some extent, supply the deficiencies of another.

If all were fully consecrated to God, these marked imperfections of character would not exist; but since the laborers do not meet the divine standard, since they weave self into all their work, the best thing, both for themselves and for the churches, is to make frequent changes. And, on the other hand, if a laborer is spiritually strong, he is, through the grace of Christ, a blessing to the churches, and his labors are needed in different conferences.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 413-421.

* From a sermon given at the General Conference of 1883.



SHOP TALK

Shop Talk is for the sharing of ideas for a more effective ministry. Please make contributions or queries brief—but do make them.

MRS. PERKINS IN A NEW DRESS

Pastors and evangelists will be happy to learn that the very popular little paperback of 64 pages, entitled *Straightening Out Mrs. Perkins*, by Reuben Greene, has been done up in a beautiful new dress and a new title. It is now called *Truth, Stranger Than Fiction*. It has many modern, full-page illustrations and is ideal to present to interested prospects.

The story of Mrs. Campwell who moved next to Mrs. Perkins and subsequently won her to the church, has been used to help win many others through the years. Now it can be still more helpful.
O. M. B.

THE LOCAL BROADCAST

One of the most effective means of reaching the masses is through the local broadcast conducted by the pastor. Now you have splendid assistance in planning your own radio program by using the new

volume *So You're Going on the Air* by J. O. Iversen, secretary of the General Conference Audio-Visual Department. This book is highly acclaimed by the experts in the field of radio, both within and without the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The pastor will do well to add it to his library and put its practical suggestions into operation in an effort to reach the millions in the cities with the gospel.

The writer explains in simple, how-to-do-it language, the steps that a pastor must take in preparing himself for broadcasting, along with a wealth of information, ample scripts, and rationales for programs.

Without doubt, *So You're Going on the Air* meets a long-felt need and will prove of inestimable value. It is available through your local Book and Bible House.

COORDINATION OF PLANS

The following appeared in "The Lamplighter" *Newsletter* for the Durham-Pittsboro-Raleigh, North Carolina, district. It presents an approach that builds for strength and unity.

"In His providence God has given each person various capabilities. These He expects us to use for His Church. When we do, we are happier and His work is strengthened. Yours may be to see a way to better coordinate the activities and plans of the church; it may be a suggestion for the *Newsletter*; it may be an idea for socials, youth work, evangelism, Sabbath School, or the physical needs of our buildings. Your pastors are doing their utmost to have well-laid plans so that all can be informed and will want to participate in the blessings that a planned program can bring. But, your help is needed and welcome. Let's pool our resources for Him. . . . Please check with your pastors so that ideas and plans may be coordinated without any timing conflicts."

J. F. HUGHES

THE MINISTRY