

Q & A. 25-K-5

Is the Spirit of prophecy, a test of fellowship?

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or if he were to answer "No" to the question asked, "Do you believe that the Spirit of prophecy is a test of fellowship?" May 8, 1958

I am ready to recognize the divergence in practice in handling this matter. There are some people who have taken the statement made by Ellen G. White as a test of fellowship in the church and some as an indication that we do not in any sense make the Spirit of prophecy a test. The very next paragraph in the article in the Review and Herald from which this is taken reads as follows:

302 Seneca Road
N. Hornell
New York

Dear Brother

Some days ago I received your card in which you ask, "Is belief in the Spirit of prophecy a test of fellowship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?" You ask for references in the Spirit of prophecy, or elsewhere.

In brief answer to your question, I would say that belief in the Spirit of prophecy is usually considered a test of acceptance of new members into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but it is not made a test of fellowship in that we would disfellowship a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who may for some reason have lost his confidence in the Spirit of prophecy, unless that individual becomes belligerent and disturbs the church of which he is a member, because of this.

Your question really finds its answer in the F. M. Wilcox book, The Testimony of Jesus, published in 1914, in the chapter, "Relation to Church Fellowship," beginning on page 136. I have a copy of the book which has been cut up for other purposes, and thinking you may not have the book at hand, I am sending along these pages to you, and at your convenience you may send them back to me. I hope you have the book, for it is a tool which every Seventh-day Adventist minister should have in his possession. I believe that the positions which are taken by Elder Wilcox are sound, and I am in full accord with them.

By referring to the statement of "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" as found in our Year Book, Church Manual, and other sources, you will find that item number 19 deals with the matter of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in the church and recognizing that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. You will find in the standard lists of questions which are to be asked new converts before they are baptized, there is one question which relates to the Spirit of prophecy. We would hardly think it consistent for the individual to join a church when he is not in accord with all the beliefs of that

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or if he were to answer "No" to the question asked, "Do you believe that the spiritual gifts were manifested in the experience of Mrs. White?"

I am ready to recognize the divergence in practice in handling this matter. There are some people who have taken the statement made by Elder Andrews, as it is quoted in Questions on Doctrine, page 97, as an indication that we do not in any sense make the Spirit of prophecy a test. The very next paragraph in the article in the Review and Herald from which this is taken reads as follows:

"There is such a thing, however, as men having in the providence of God an opportunity to become acquainted with the special work of the Spirit of God, so that they shall acknowledge that their light is clear, convincing, and satisfactory. To such persons, we consider the gifts of the Spirit are clearly a test. Not only has God spoken, but they have had opportunity to ascertain that fact, and to know it for themselves. In all such cases, spiritual gifts are manifestly a test that cannot be disregarded except at the peril of eternal ruin."

This paragraph you will find quoted in the Wilcox article on pages 140 and 141. Inasmuch as Elder Wilcox has treated the subject so fully and well, it will not be necessary for me to write more on this subject.

As to the interpretation that may be placed upon the statements in Questions on Doctrine, the leaders of the church declare that we have not changed our position on the question of the Spirit of prophecy and our attitude to it. We could wish that the statement in Questions on Doctrine were just a little stronger and more positive on this point.

Thank you for writing. I trust that this information will be of service to you. If I can help you further, please feel free to write again.

With the best of wishes, I am

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary
ELLEN G. WHITE PUBLICATIONS

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Encl.

By referring to the statement of Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists as found in our Year Book, Church Manual, and other literature, it is seen that the matter of the Spirit of prophecy is dealt with in the matter of the gifts of the Spirit of prophecy in the church and recognizing that the gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. It is found in the standard lists of questions which are to be asked new converts before they are baptized, there is one question which relates to the Spirit of prophecy. We would hardly think it consistent for the individual to join a church when he is not in accord with all the beliefs of that