

ELLEN G. WHITE *Publications*

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GENERAL CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
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December 17, 1956

A. V. OLSON, *President*
A. L. WHITE, *Secretary*
D. A. DELAFIELD, *Associate Secretary*

2036 N 25th Street
Philadelphia 21, Pennsylvania

Dear Brother

In your letter, written December 10, you ask concerning counsel given by Sister White as it may relate to clubs made up of church members banded together for some proper social or benevolent objective. You also make inquiry concerning sales of one kind and another for the purpose of raising money in religious work. In questions of this kind, we must get to the basic principles which Ellen White seeks to set before the church as a warning, or a counsel, or in the form of guidance. On the question of clubs, my only memory and the only record I am able to turn to this morning is that which relates to the activities of Seventh-day Adventists in certain temperance clubs of the early days. You will find reference to this in Temperance, pages 217 and onward. It becomes clear that our people were becoming involved with worldlings in their association and activities in such a way as to prove detrimental.

Another presentation from Ellen White's pen which might have a bearing on the over-all question is to be found in the book, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, beginning with page 541, the chapter entitled, "Literary Societies." I like this chapter, because it not only deals particularly with literary societies, but it brings out the basic principles which we must cherish in any association of this kind. It also points out the dangers which exist. I would direct you especially to this chapter, for I think you will find in it the general guidance which you are seeking.

But as to a pointed Spirit of prophecy condemnation of clubs of Adventists which may be formed for some good purpose, we are unable to turn to such. In some of our churches, we have clubs of young married couples, for instance. They meet together occasionally in social gathering, with an endeavor to plan the program in a way which is uplifting and helpful. We are inclined to look with considerable favor on such organizations. Whether or not they are beneficial or harmful depends upon how they are managed, and these principles are brought out so clearly by Ellen White in dealing with the question of literary societies.

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The second question relates to the holding of dinners and programs, et cetera, to raise funds. The Spirit of prophecy points out very definitely the hazard of appealing to the love of pleasure, or the indulgence of appetite as a means of loosening the purse strings, and thus aiding the cause of God. In the setting of these principles, Ellen White speaks of bazaars and dinners and sales, et cetera, which are quite common with certain churches of the world. Neither in the Spirit of prophecy, nor in our denominational actions, do we have a condemnation of a group of church members making and selling some useful objects, whether in the textile field or food lines, and thus using their skills and materials to help raise money which can be used in benevolent work. These principles are set forth very fully in a mimeographed document I am sending you entitled, "Food Sales." Here again we must study certain basic principles, and then chart a course which will be in harmony with what we know to be right principles, guarding against certain hazards, and dangers.

I trust that this information will be of service to you.

With the best of wishes, I am

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary
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Encl.