

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

An Earnest Appeal to My Historic Adventist Brothers and Sisters

by Neil C. Livingston

The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. . . (Manuscript Releases, Vol. 21, page 276).

Dear historic Adventist Brothers and Sisters: All the signs of the end that we as a people have known for the past one hundred and fifty years are swiftly being fulfilled. The winds of strife (cancer, heart disease, aids, and now the possibility of terrorists reintroducing smallpox, plus many other dreadful diseases, the cure of which is now totally unknown to medical science) are soon to break with hurricane fury upon planet earth. Almost daily on the news media we hear strange phrases, such as "global warming," "greenhouse effect." What does this all mean? The ozone is yearly, monthly, daily, being depleted by the greed and voracious pollution of man. As a result the sea and the waves are roaring - and with this erosion of the ozone that God placed over planet earth to protect man, *power is literally given to the sun to scorch men with heat!* (Revelation 16:8b). Each year the west is devastated by greater and greater forest fires.

"How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate," Joel prophesied. "The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Joel 1:18, 20, emphasis supplied).

Just now there is the threat of cattle diseases, such as "mad cow," again of which there is no cure known to medical science. Then there is "hoof and mouth," which is spread on the wind. This devastating disease would totally wipe out the cattle industry in America almost over night. "Oh, that would be just fine," you say, "we historic Adventists do not eat meat anyway!" However, the destruction of America's beef industry would have a devastating economic effect world wide. Industries such as McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, and many others would close immediately. Hundreds of thousands of jobs would be lost over night from this one plague.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring," Jesus prophesied, "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25, 26, emphasis supplied).

For the first time in history, the awful devastation of a new kind of warfare has

come to the United States in the destruction of the Trade Center Building in New York City, and the Pentagon Building in Washington. Just now the nation is gripped in fear of the possibility of deadly germ and biological warfare being unleashed upon our homes, our children and loved ones.

In this pre-time of trouble we should not be discouraged or afraid. Jesus said that immediately following these signs He would come for His people. After the statements quoted above, Jesus said in the following two verses, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; *for your redemption draweth nigh.*" (Luke 21:27, 28, emphasis supplied).

Another great end-time sign is that the Papacy is now cloaked in robes of peace, love and forgiveness - but underneath she is the great beast of Revelation thirteen that slew the saints during the dark ages. The truth is that she is unchanged.

"The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties," Ellen White warned. "She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged." (*The Great Controversy*, page 571, emphasis supplied).

Political forces are at work to bring the church and state together, which will immediately signal the beginning of the end of God's blessing for America:

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions [vouchers], then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result," Ellen White warned. "The 'image to the beast' represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas." (*The Great Controversy*, page 445, emphasis supplied).

In this troubled time in which we now live, Satan and his legions of demons are working with tremendous effort and speed to destroy mankind because they know that they have a very short time. This is doubly true of Satan's warfare against the Lord's remnant people. Jesus urged and pleaded that we be united against Satan and his demons - *especially in this "little time of trouble" just prior to the close of human probation.*

"The powers of Satan are mustering for battle," Ellen White wrote. "Stern conflicts are before us. *Press together, my brethren and sisters, press together.*" (*Bible Training School*, December 1, 1902, emphasis supplied).

Please note the date of this testimony, dear reader. We are now living almost

one hundred years after this statement. How much more we should press together in these last troubled times.

"All Ye Are Brethren"

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another," Jesus said. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. *All ye are brethren.*" (John 13:34, 35; Matthew 23:8b, emphasis supplied).

Unity in the Truth

"All ye are brethren,' Matthew 23:8," Ellen White quoted Jesus from the gospel of Matthew. "We are one in the unity of the truth." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 197, emphasis supplied).

Before we can proceed with our study of unity in the truth, we must first know of a surety what is the truth. What are the true pillars and landmarks of historic Adventism?

A Call to Understand What Are the True Pillars and Landmarks of Adventism

Our people need to understand the reasons of our faith and our past experiences. How sad it is that so many of them apparently place unlimited confidence in men who present theories tending to uproot our past experiences and to remove the old landmarks! Those who can so easily be led by a false spirit show that they have been following a wrong captain for some time--so long that they do not discern that they are departing from the faith, or that they are not building upon the true foundation. We need to urge all to put on their spiritual eyeglasses, to have their eyes anointed that they may see clearly and discern the true pillars of the faith. Then they will know that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). We need to revive the old evidences of the faith once delivered to the saints. (Ellen G. White, "Early Fanaticism to be Repeated," "Removing the Landmarks," *Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, page 25). (emphasis supplied).

Notice that, "Our people need to understand the reasons of our faith and our past experiences." Here Ellen White is speaking of historic Adventism, beyond question.

"Oh, that does not apply to us," you reply. "This testimony applies to the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church, not to independent ministries of historic Adventism." But Ellen White states, "Our people need to understand." Our people. That is us, is it not? Yes, this testimony is for us. And Ellen White laments, "How sad it is." You know the old saying, "We have met the enemy, *and the enemy is us!*"

This testimony further states that so many of us "apparently place unlimited confidence in men who present theories tending to uproot our past experiences and to remove the old landmarks!" (*ibid.*). "Impossible!" you say. "That could not be us, could it?" "We know, and have always taught, the true pillars and

landmarks of our faith. Are we not historic Adventists?"

"We need to urge all to put on their spiritual eyeglasses," Ellen White replies, "to have their eyes anointed that they may see clearly and discern the true pillars of the faith." (*ibid.*, *Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, page 25, emphasis supplied).

Do we really know what the true historic pillars and landmarks of Adventism are? Did you know that there are only three pillars of historic Adventism? It is true! Many have been teaching weird and strange side-issues and presenting them as the very pillars of Adventism. At this late hour it is imperative that we know, beyond question, what these three pillars of historic Adventism really are.

The Three Pillars and Landmarks of Adventism Defined

The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth, [also] the first and second angels' messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" [KJV]. [1] One of the landmarks under this message was the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. [2] The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. [3] The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks [1888-1900, etc.] is all imaginary. (*ibid.*, Ellen G. White, *Manuscript*, 1889; "The Landmarks Defined," *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pages 30, 31). (emphasis supplied).

Notice, dear reader, that Ellen White states, "I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks." Again, there were, and are, only three old landmarks and pillars of Adventism. (1) "The temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God." (2) "The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law." (3) "The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark." Again, the Sanctuary truth, the Sabbath truth, and the truth of the nonimmortality of the wicked. All who believe these three (3) eternal truths are historic Adventist brethren, and must be respected as such. All other beliefs that are added to these three (3) landmark pillars of Adventism are merely side-issues and are of lesser importance in these last hours. These side-issues should never separate historic Adventist brethren. However, some make of side issues a great mountain that separates true brethren in this last "remnant" Advent movement - *when at this hour what is needed most is unity of the brethren.*

Now, dear reader, let us consider some of the ridiculous and absurd side-issues that are being presented by some as the very fulcrum, the crux, the very pillars and landmarks of historic Adventism.

10 Examples of Side Issues and Divisive Messages in Some Independent Ministries

(1) The Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and must not be supported, it is claimed.

Those who have proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, have made use of the Testimonies in giving their position a seeming support; but why is it that they did not present that which for years has been the burden of my message -- the unity of the church? Why did they not quote the words of the angel, "Press together, press together, press together?" Why did they not repeat the admonition and state the principle, that "in union there is strength, in division there is weakness?" It is such messages as these men have borne, that divide the church, and put us to shame before the enemies of truth, and in such messages is plainly revealed the specious working of the great deceiver, who would hinder the church from attaining unto perfection in unity. These teachers follow the sparks of their own kindling, move according to their own independent judgment, and cumber the truth with false notions and theories. They refuse the counsel of their brethren, and press on in their own way, until they become just what Satan would desire to have them -- unbalanced in mind. I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren. Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another. Avoid dissension. Let every one be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach. (Ellen G. White, "Babylon and the Remnant Church," *Notebook Leaflets* from the Elmshaven Library, Vol. 1, page 51). (emphasis supplied)

(2) All who do not separate from the denominational Seventh-day Adventist Church are now lost. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and must not be supported, it is claimed.

Again, all Adventists who believe in the above three (3) pillars and landmarks of historic Adventism, are true brethren and must be included as part of God's true remnant. I personally believe that the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church will never reform. Those who believe that the corporate Church will reform are my brethren in Christ - *as long as they continue to preach and teach those three (3) pillars and landmarks of historic Adventism*. Who is right on this issue of denominational reform? Time will tell. Perhaps when we are all together in the great time of trouble we will know for sure about the reformation of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Speculation on future events are mostly side-issues. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (I Corinthians 13:12).

(3) The Testimonies have been altered, even while Ellen White was alive, and therefore cannot be trusted. Only the very early testimonies can be trusted. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact cannot be trusted and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

This position, of course, is really stating that Ellen White was so stupid that she did not check her own publications after they were edited. But did Ellen White examine her own publications?

"Now, Brother Smith, I have been making a careful, critical examination of the work that has been done on the *Testimonies*, and I see a few things that I think should be corrected in the matter brought before you and others at the General

Conference [November, 1883]," Ellen White continued. "But as I examine the matter more carefully I see less and less that is objectionable." (*Letter 11*, 1884, pp. 1, 2. (To Elder Uriah Smith, Feb. 19, 1884, emphasis supplied). (For extensive study on this subject see, "The Editing the Testimonies," *Landmarks*, May, 2001).

(4) You must believe the correct view on who is the King of the North or you will lose your way. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact cannot be trusted and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

This one is a most definite side-issue. What one believes on this subject should never separate historic Adventists. I sincerely believe that Uriah Smith, along with other Adventist pioneers will be present in the earth made new. The question is, will we be there also?

(5) You must believe in a double application of Bible prophecy in Daniel and Revelation or you will be deceived and may not be ready to meet the Lord. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact cannot be trusted and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

Another ridicules side-issue that separates brethren. This belief opens wide the door to many strange and extreme views. The Waco group and many others have stumbled over strange "new" interpretations of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Interpretations that differ greatly from those of our Adventist pioneers. Many are looking for "new light," something strange and new to present.

"Two or three days ago I received a chart from one who professes to be a Sabbath keeper in California, and he feels very sore over the fact that the Pacific Press does not pay respect to his productions, and accept the light he would present to the world," Ellen White related. "There will be gods many and lords many that will be struggling for recognition; *but should the persons that feel such a burden to pour out something original upon the world, walk humbly with God in meekness and contrition of spirit, the Lord would recognize them and give them the grace of His Holy Spirit, in order that they might do the very work, according to their ability, which God would have them do.*" ("Independent Publishing," *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 154, emphasis supplied).

(6) A new prophet since Ellen White must be accepted or you will lose your way and be lost. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

Still another belief that has separated many brethren. Simply read the history of the "Shepherd's Rod" movement to plainly see the folly of this position. How many have been led astray by false prophets and false shepherds?

"There will be many voices saying, Here is Christ, here is truth," Ellen White

warned. "Watch carefully, guard every point, lest you be taken unawares."
("Study God's Word: Be Slow to Follow Self-Styled Prophets, Including Anna
Phillips," *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 14, page 199).

(7) The word *Yahweh* must always be used in reference to our Heavenly Father or you will be lost. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

I must admit that this belief is a strange "new" position that I have never heard until recently. That is, except among Jehovah's Witnesses. Evidently, these good brethren have recently come out of the Watchtower Society, for this is one of their main teachings. The Watchtower Society contends this position from their own erroneous *New World* translation of the Bible, a version that historic Adventism does not advocate.

(8) A religious painting or picture in your home or in your books violates the Second Commandment which makes you an idolater. If you look at, or possess religious paintings or pictures, you will be lost. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

Here is a real beauty of an extreme view that separates brethren. There are many such "extreme" views today, which we are told to avoid.

"Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another," Ellen White counseled. "Avoid dissension. Let every one be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, *in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach.*" (*ibid.*, *Notebook Leaflets* from the Elmshaven Library, Vol. 1, page 51, emphasis supplied).

(9) All the planets will be lined up on May 5, 2000? [first failed prediction] 2001? [second failed prediction] 2002? [new dates set each year], therefore Christ will return on that date. All must accept this theory or be lost. Independent ministries that do not teach this fact are apostate and therefore must not be supported, it is claimed.

Such a ridiculous belief of time-setting needs no further comment!

(10) The Lord has given me great light. I have the truth. My ministry is really the only true independent ministry that should be supported with your tithes and offerings. All must accept my ministry - my interpretation of prophecy - my position on the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church - or they will lose their way and be lost, it is claimed.

Unfortunately, this is the position of many independent ministries today. Although it is emphatically denied, many secretly hold this view of their own ministries, but the Lord knows what is truly in our hearts. "For the word of God is quick, and

powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12, emphasis supplied). "He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." (Daniel 2:22).

Ellen White was given a detailed description of the independent ministry movement that would take place in Adventism one hundred years after the following testimony was first given:

The Many Voices of Independent Ministries

After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, every conceivable power of evil will be set in operation, and minds will be confused by many voices crying, "Lo, here is Christ, Lo, he is there. This is the truth, I have the message from God, he has sent me with great light." Then there will be a removing of the landmarks, and an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith. . . . (Ellen G. White, "Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound" (Concluded), *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 13, 1892. (Original source); See also, *Maranatha*, page 189; *Maranatha*, page 192; *Selected Messages*, Bk. 3, page 406; *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, page 985). (emphasis supplied).

Notice the time-setting of this prophecy; "After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations." What will take place at that time? Ellen White replies, "minds will be confused by many voices crying, 'Lo, here is Christ, Lo, he is there.'" Many voices will say, "This is the truth, I have the message from God, he has sent me with great light." Also observe that it is stated further that at that time, "Then there will be a removing of the landmarks, *and an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith.*" Ellen White had stated following the 1888 message that some had accused Waggoner and Jones of tearing down the old landmarks. But she stated that Jones and Waggoner had not removed the old landmarks, but that the accusers new not what the old landmarks really were. Now, in this prophecy of the independent movement of our day, Ellen White states that "there will be a removing of the landmarks, *and an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith.*" Because there has been a removing of the landmarks, and there has been an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith, the independent ministry movement has come into existence. This, beyond question, is God's altered plan for finishing the work. However, Satan has not been sleeping. He endeavors to destroy this historic Adventist independent movement as he has destroyed the purpose and message of the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church denomination.

"Satan and his angels are wide-awake, and intensely active," Ellen White continued, "working with energy and perseverance through human instrumentalities to bring about his purpose of obliterating from the minds of men the knowledge of God." (*ibid.*, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 13, 1892).

Satan will work by causing division, dissension and bickering among independent ministries. This, of course, is the true picture of our present

condition. Satan has stolen a march upon us. The solution is that we must defeat Satan and his legions of demons by "pressing together" in the unity of the truth. The Lord has promised His faithful remnant that at this trying time He will pour out the latter rain upon His true messengers, and the work will be completed in the mighty loud cry of the third angel's message.

"But while Satan works with his lying wonders, the time will be fulfilled foretold in the Revelation [18]," Ellen White concluded, "and the mighty angel that shall lighten the earth with his glory, will proclaim the fall of Babylon, and call upon God's people to forsake her." (*ibid.*, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 13, 1892, emphasis supplied).

In 1893, one year after the above testimony was published in the *Review and Herald*, Ellen White again cautioned that there would be "many voices" claiming to have the truth:

I entreat all who shall read or hear these words to be instant in season and out of season. Believe God, but do not without question sanction everything that claims to come from God. There will be many voices saying, Here is Christ, here is truth. Watch carefully, guard every point, lest you be taken unawares.--*Letter 4*, 1893. (Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, D. C., January 3, 1985. Entire Letter. (emphasis supplied). (See also, "Study God's Word: Be Slow to Follow Self-Styled Prophets, Including Anna Phillips," *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 14, page 199).

So what is the answer? What can we do in these last days to keep from being deceived? Surely God has not left us without a guideline to keep us in the middle of the path to the Kingdom of Heaven.

"I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren," Ellen White counseled. "Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another." (*Notebook Leaflets* from the Elmshaven Library, Vol. 1, page 51, emphasis supplied).

"Avoid dissension," Ellen White stated further. "Let every one be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach." (*ibid.*, *Notebook Leaflets* from the Elmshaven Library, Vol. 1, page 51).

This statement from the Spirit of Prophecy is a strong call for unity among historic Adventists. Notice the following four important points of this testimony:

(1) "I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren."

Those who claim to believe historic Adventism are to walk in unity with their brethren. Of course, our brethren are those who believe and practice historic Adventism - the three (3) pillars and landmarks of Adventism. (See above). Those who have given up the historic Advent truth for the doctrines of fallen

Babylon are not our brethren. However, efforts should be made to retrieve those former brethren who have given up the truth.

(2) "Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists."

The work "seek" means that we are not to "attempt," to "pursue," to "endeavor," or "aspire," "to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists." The sad fact is that there are many so-called historic Adventists and independent ministries today who could be considered as "extremists." Consider our past history for a moment, dear reader. In our earlier history there was "The Marion Party." In more recent years there have been such "extremists" groups as, "The Shepard's Rod," also known as "Dividian Seventh-day Adventists." This devastating movement climaxed in the awful fiasco at Waco, Texas. What a witness against historic Advent truth that sad debacle was! We then had an "extremist" group called "Brinsmead." This movement followed one man, Robert Brinsmead. The movement began in Australia and quickly moved to America. What was the result of this apostate movement? The movement developed into what we now know as "the new theology." Brinsmead later espoused the heretical teachings of Desmond Ford, (1) no literal Sanctuary in heaven, and (2), "free grace" - salvation without obedience to the law of God. The entire Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been swept away by these teachings of Desmond Ford and Robert Brinsmead. Some say that Robert Brinsmead and Walter Rae, another Adventist minister who rejected Ellen White, now espouse Sunday observance and the rest of the heresy of fallen Babylon. All of these heretical movements have brought reproach upon the third angel's message and the work of God's true remnant historic Adventist independent ministries. Extremist individuals and groups give to the world the impression "that we are disunited." Further, we are admonished not to give to the world the impression "that one teaches one thing, and one another." What is the answer?

(3) Simply, "Avoid dissension."

(4) "Let every one be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, *in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach.*" (Isaiah 58:12).

How many of us today are constantly looking for something to disagree with - something with which we might renounce a ministry, and thereby bring more support for our own ministry. We must be very careful that we are not counted among those who are "standing at the wall seeking to make a breach." If we say that most other independent ministries are teaching heresy, and our ministry is the only true one, then we are truly standing at the wall of truth seeking to make a breach, when at this crucial hour the Lord is calling for unity among brethren.

"All who are truly converted unto the proclamation of the third angel's message must not present to the world, to angels, and to men, division in the place of unity," Ellen White warned. "The truth of God sanctifies the receiver to be a

channel and representative of His grace to the world and to angels and to men." (*Manuscript 130*, pages 1, 10. Untitled, November 27, 1901, emphasis supplied).

"All who are called [are] prepared and aided by one Agency," Ellen White concluded. "*From one great and powerful Source there would be love and unity*; their Christian instrumentality to be proved and to glorify God *in love and harmonious action*, each strengthening the other and each taking diligent heed to his own course of action in the great and solemn work before them in presenting the sanctifying truth to souls ready to die." (*ibid.*, *Manuscript 130*, pages 1, 10. Untitled, November 27, 1901: see also, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 16, page 196, emphasis supplied).

Our Unfortunate Disunity Position Today

We are not to feel that we must speak the very same things, giving the same representation in the same words, and yet there is to be unity in the diversity. All the different testimonies unite to form one whole, as the books of the Bible are brought together, and bound under one cover. But should Matthew, Mark, Luke and John go off on some tangent, contradicting each other's testimony, then there would be confusion. In all the presentation of truth by different minds, there is to be unity in diversity. One must not labor to have everything that comes from his mind entirely different from that which comes from another man's mind. But he is to follow in the line where the Spirit of the Lord shall direct, then there will be different figures and different ways of presentation, that will interest and educate different minds. Some are always straining to get something original; *this places them in great danger*. They produce something new, that is not according to the Word of God, and they have not the discernment to see the real harm that results from their ambition to excel some other one in new and strange productions. Thus error comes to appear to them as truth, and they present it as wonderful new light, when it is an innovation that makes of none effect a "Thus saith the Lord." (Ellen G. White, "Diversity and Unity in God's Work," *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 8, page 66). (emphasis supplied).

Division and Disunity vs Unity in Diversity

"What does all this have to do with our beloved independent ministries?" you ask again. Oh dear historic Adventist brothers and sisters, what are we doing at this critical hour? Are we pressing together in the unity of the truth? No! We are fighting and bickering, separating over side-issues. Although the Spirit of Prophecy is very clear that we should "press together" (over 153 statements) many of us look to find some issue to separate us from other historic Adventist brothers and sisters. Satan is pleased. Division has been his work from the beginning.

Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. Their doctrines will not bear the test of God's word, yet souls will be deceived. False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare. They will believe these rumors and in their turn will repeat them, and thus a link will be formed connecting them with the archdeceiver. This spirit will not always be manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in many ways. Every false statement that is made feeds and strengthens this unbelief, and through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction. (Ellen G. White,

Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pages 295, 296). (emphasis supplied).

Notice the time element of this testimony, " As the coming of Christ draws nigh." Satan will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow God's people. "Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation *whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks.*" However, "Their doctrines will not bear the test of God's word, yet souls will be deceived."

Today, with the use of computers and the technology of instant E-mail capabilities, "False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare." Many so-called historic Adventists, sitting at their computers, "will believe these rumors and in their turn will repeat them, and thus a link will be formed connecting them with the archdeceiver." A link! That is computer language, is it not? It is now possible to spread rumors around the earth in seconds by means of a computer connected to the world-wide Internet. We are warned that, "This spirit will not always be manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in many ways." Ellen White concluded that, "Every false statement that is made feeds and strengthens this unbelief, *and through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction.*"

This testimony is for us, dear reader. We must be very careful how we spread rumors and innuendos by means of our computers through E-mail technology of the Internet.

One last observation of our present condition. Many independent ministry leaders are wasting their time traveling great distances, at a great expense, to speak again and again at historic Adventist camp meetings. Wasting our time speaking to historic Adventists who have heard the message over and over again. I do not mean to be harsh, dear brothers and sisters, but I live in what is called the Inland Empire of Eastern Washington State. Although there are over one half million souls in this area, there is not one historic Adventist ministry working here. There is no place for a historic Adventist to attend Sabbath services.

What we should be doing is ministering to the one half million here, and the millions in your area, who are today ready to accept the third angel's message. With what is on the news media today, the populace would readily accept the wonderful edition of the 1888 *Great Controversy* produced by brother Charles Wheeling. Although I am not a particular supporter of Charles Wheeling's ministry, this wonderful, affordable paper-back edition (produced by brother Wheeling) is titled, *America In Prophecy*. Others have produced similar editions of *The Great Controversy*, however, the cover of this edition, *America In Prophecy*, has a most wonderful red, white, and blue cover, with other prophetic symbols depicting America on the front of the book. Since the recent events in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, the sale of American flags has increased ten thousand fold. This *America In Prophecy* edition of *The Great*

Controversy is "just what the doctor ordered," so to speak. It may be purchased by the case. In my humble opinion this edition should be distributed at this critical hour by the millions.

True Unity In Diversity of Ministries

Christ compares his followers to the branches of a vine. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," he says. In the branches of a vine there is diversity, and yet in this diversity there is unity. Every branch is united to the parent stalk. Every branch draws its nourishment from the same source. When we are branches of the true Vine, there will be no quarreling among us, no strife for the supremacy, no disparaging of one another. (Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 25, 1901). (emphasis supplied).

Oh dear Adventist brothers and sisters, may we endeavor to press together, press together in the unity of the truth.. This is my prayer in Jesus name. Your brother, Neil..

"Press Together! Press Together! Press Together!" (Notebook Leaflets, Vol. 1, page 51).