

# The NAD Tithe Misappropriation Policy

## Part One of Three

The situation in Adventism is becoming deplorable.

At the rate things are going, soon there will only be two classes of Advent believers: those who obey the General Conference and those who do not.

Yet that is not what Seventh-day Adventism was supposed to be all about! It was intended to be a people united by the faith of the Three Angels, the historic beliefs bequeathed to our people,—who served the God of heaven alone!

As you may know, there are three classes of semi-independent institutions among us.

**First**, there are those groups and organizations which carry on the work outlined in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, regardless of whether or not it pleases the General Conference, local unions, conferences, or pastors. These groups are fully independent. They receive all their donations from individuals, and carry on their work, irrespective of whether or not they receive church approval. They refuse to be pressured into surrendering the funds sent in for one purpose, to another organization to be used for a different purpose.

**Second**, are those groups and organizations which are also trying to serve God,—while, at the same time, attempting to please leaders of the church on various levels and remain submissive to ever-changing policy decisions of church committees. These groups are partially independent, in the sense that they receive their donations from individuals, yet they are still trying to conform to ever-strengthening church policies.

**Third**, there are those groups and organizations which are trying to do the best they can, but their boards are directly under the control of denominational leaders.

These groups are subsidized by the denomination, but also solicit and receive donations from individuals.

We admire and appreciate all these groups for their sincere, earnest efforts.

Some may say that the first group are foolish for trying to press forward, in spite of a lack of official church approval. Some will consider the second group foolish in trying to keep working with leaders who have officially rejected some key Adventist beliefs and standards. Some will conclude the third group are captive to the whims of church leadership.

But, be it as it may, there is no doubt in our mind that these various groups are trying to do the best they can, in spite of the limitations they must work under. And each one, obviously, works under severe, but very different, limitations.

For several years, church leadership has tried to stop independent groups in the first category. This is a well-known fact.

But now we are shocked to learn that church leaders, in their anxiety to control and obtain all the funds they can for themselves,—are deliberately willing to destroy the other quasi-independent organizations as well!

Leadership is trying to do this by cutting off their funds. But, instead of requiring outright that they no longer accept donations or return them (which would be the honest thing to do), it is cleverly requiring that they accept the funds on false pretenses, thus implicating them in the plot. Yet that scheme will only work to their own destruction as Advent believers gradually learn of the duplicity that is being practiced.

Under the relatively new policy,

those organizations willing to submit to that policy—must hand over certain funds to the local conference, which in turn is assigned the task of dividing and sharing them with the headquarters of the local union, the North American Division, and the General Conference!

**First**, that is a sneaky operation. It is not a method that simple, humble-hearted Christian folk would lower themselves to requiring of others.

**Second**, it is highway robbery. It is not only obtaining, on false pretenses, money sent in by laymen, but it is stealing funds sent to those ministries. The semi-independent organizations are required to dig their own graves—by giving away their money to men it was not supposed to go to.

**Third**, it is an insult to the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit which guides and motivates men to send the needed funds for the support of these various ministries, and when a small clique of men in one committee (NAD) in Silver Spring, Maryland, have the power to cast a great net—and pull away massive amounts of money from a great number of church entities, that little group of men act as if they were God.

Consider the plight this places the laymen in. Shaken by the deepening apostasy in the church—in standards, doctrines, finances, and worship services, an Advent believer, in fullest sincerity of heart, prayerfully selects a ministry he wishes to send a contribution to.

But when the donation arrives at that ministry, the deception required by the new North American policy begins. The contribution is duly receipted and mailed to the layman. He believes his donation will be used for the purpose he specified in his letter or on the

check. Please note: The donation receipt comes to him from the organization he sent the money to!

But, next, a new check is written—and that donation, along with many others, is sent to the local conference office. The check is banked there, and then divided up in accordance with a predetermined percentage plan, and portions are sent to the union, the North American Division, and the General Conference. And what do those four church headquarters do with that money? Since that policy is silent, they can do anything they want with it! It can be used to pay the salary of new theology pastors. It can help subsidize a meditation retreat or a Celebration training seminar. It can be sent to Loma Linda, instead of the money the church is required by a different policy to send to Loma Linda.

But that is not where the donors wanted that money to go!

As for the hapless donor, because he receives a donation receipt from the organization he sent his donation to, he thinks the funds he sent in good faith—really went to the organization he sent it to.

Truly, this is a terrible situation. It is just not honest. Frankly, it is horrible to think our leading men in Silver Spring, Maryland, who control the finances of our church—dreamed up such a fraudulent scheme. What other financial frauds are they devising?

Someone will say that we are only complaining because it involves us. We are not involved, because we refuse to send on to any other organization donations sent to us, unless so specified by the donor in writing at the time the donation is sent. We are a totally-independent organization.

Why must worldly, policed leaders try to put such pressure on kindly, hard-working folk, who are trying to do the best they can where they are? What right does church

leadership have to require submissive church entities to misuse incoming funds?

Some of our readers will recall our earlier warning about this practice, when it was initiated in 1992. That warning is now out of print, but this present, larger information sheet will provide you those, and many more, salient details.

Of the three types of organizations, mentioned earlier, **the third category** of institutions involved, would include all church-owned and/or church subsidized organizations.

Church-owned institutions would include Loma Linda University, Andrews University, etc.

Church-subsidized institutions receive support from the church, in the way of a yearly collection in every denominational church. Each one amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars. In addition, each of these institutions is directly controlled by the church. This is due to the fact that over 51 percent of their board members are church leaders.

Church-subsidized institutions include Voice of Prophecy, It Is Written, Faith for Today, Breath of Life, Hour of Prophecy, etc.

**The second category** of institution would be those organizations which do not receive subsidies from the church and do not have 51 percent of their boards controlled by church leaders. However, they are still willing to submit to and obey the ever-changing church policies which are handed down.

Such institutions include Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, Adventist Pioneer Missions, E-VAN-gelism, etc.

Some organizations in this second category refuse certain donations, while others will be receipting it and passing it on to their local conference office.

**The first category** would be those institutions which are totally independent: They do not receive

subsidies from the church, their boards are not controlled by church leaders, and they do not yield to policy decisions made by the denomination. This position should not be interpreted as rebellion or disobedience. It is simply a matter of authority. God's people are to obey the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy rather than policy when it conflicts with the Inspired Writings.

The North American Division ruling was handed down in 1992, and organizations, structurally or emotionally dependent upon church leadership, were immediately required to implement it. Quietly, they were to immediately begin sending certain donations on to their local conferences.

A believer, for example, sends a special donation to a church-controlled southern California missionary project, so the world will hear the third angel's message. But the donation is sent by the quasi-independent project to the Southern California Conference, which uses it to pay pastor's salaries and hold a meditation retreat.

Obviously, this strange North American Division policy conflicts with the Word of God, violates the faith of the trusting donor, compromises the integrity of the organization which passed it on, and brands the conference office as receiving property which does not belong to them.

How much confidence would you place in an organization that received stolen property? How much would you place in that organization, if it required that the property be sent to it—so it would be stolen?

Yet even the various subsidiary organizations (those in category two or three) stalled as long as they could. They feared to take such a plunge. A higher law, written in God's Word, required that they were to keep faith with the donors they

# The NAD Tithe Misappropriation Policy \_\_\_\_\_ 3

served.

But immense pressure was applied (*note the remarks by Russell Standish, quoted on page four of this report, about the pressure applied to just one of those organizations.*)

Finally, it was agreed that all subservient organizations would obey the mandate, as of January 1, 1995.

As I write this, within a few days the new ruling will go into effect.

Over the years, there have been faithful men in these organizations who have tried to resist the encroachments of church takeover. Great pressure has been brought to bear on those who have tried to carry on their work, while seeking in vain for that point in which they might fully please church leadership, yet without being absorbed as a controlled organization, and without disobeying God's Word.

As you might guess, this has been a difficult balancing act. The pressures to conform never seem to cease, and the quasi organization

teeters one way and then totters the other. On one side is the chasm of complete denominational takeover; on the other is the abyss of being ostracized, in warning letters, from conference headquarters to pastors and members.

One of the last holdouts in this second category of institutions was Amazing Facts. While living in the Chesapeake Conference in the early 1970s, I learned that Amazing Facts had announced to everyone, including the conference office, that it no longer wanted to receive subsidies from the church. It was receiving enough donations to maintain itself. That decision was made to henceforth safeguard Amazing Facts, so it would not slip under denominational control, as had the Voice of Prophecy.

As some of you may know, the brethren were opposed to the work of H.M.S. Richards, Sr., and wanted to stop his broadcasts. It was not until the late 1930s or early 1940s, when denominational leaders were given 51 percent control of the VOP board, that they accepted it. Hence-

forth, it became a subsidized church institution.

Later, in the mid-1970s, the VOP was forced to move from its own Glendale quarters to those Grecian-style buildings in Thousand Oaks, California—solely because a committee in Washington, D.C., headquarters said it had to be done.

There were many who felt assured that Amazing Facts would never yield to the pressure, but it finally has! We are astounded! We are not angry with Amazing Facts; we are well-aware of the intense coercion which must have brought them to this point. There are fine people there.

If possible, there is a fact in all this which is even more significant:

*If Amazing Facts—which receives no church subsidies and does not have its board controlled by church leaders—can no longer resist the pressure, you can know that there is no other Seventh-day Adventist entity, approved by leadership, which has withstood the pressure!*

Well then, How can you tell whether a given semi-independent organization has yielded to the pressure to obey church policies? —*The simple fact that it is still approved by the denomination!*

What does this mean?

It means that every independent ministry which is not opposed by church leadership, will henceforth be sending certain funds received from donors, on to their local conference offices—to be shared with the union conference, North American Division, and General Conference!

Yet that is not what those funds were sent for!

In a two-page letter from Amazing Facts headquarters, dated December 21, 1994, sent to all donors, it was announced that they would, as of January 1, 1995, be

**Amazing Facts** has done and continues to do its best to carry on a worthwhile evangelistic work. This study is not about Amazing Facts, but about the determination (and, unfortunately, the success) of the General Conference in bringing all ministries willing to be organizationally linked to it, under ever-stricter leadership controls.

We lament this effort to establish a kingly power in our denomination. Read again our Spirit of Prophecy compilation, **Confederation and Consolidation—Part 1-3 [RS—17-19]**, now in section two of our **Medical/Publishing Tractbook**.

There is not to be a central power, controlling every aspect of the worldwide church, dictating

what is and what is not to be done. Consider this statements:

“You know what a confederacy is,—a union of men in a work that does not bear the stamp of pure, straightforward, unswerving integrity.”—*Manuscript 29, 1911 (4 Bible Commentary, 1142)*.

“Consolidation means that all institutions are to be merged into the Battle Creek institutions. For years something of this kind has been proposed by one and another. But according to the light I have had, the plan is wrong.”—*Letter 4, 1895*.

“It would be dangerous to consolidate all our institutions under one head at Battle Creek, and let one institution control all the others. This would prove a curse. The Lord has not designed that Battle Creek should control all these instrumentalities.”—*Manuscript 11, 1895*.

**Please pray for the many ministries which are trying to carry on in spite of great difficulties.**

adhering to this church ruling! (*It is reprinted in full on page ten.*)

We still respect Amazing Facts, but deplore their submission to this NAD ruling. When the accounting department of an organization crumbles before pressure, can the doctrinal presentation bear up against the continued pressure? We surely hope so, but we see this as a great crisis in our midst.

Why?

**First**, as stated before, Amazing

I felt terribly disheartened yesterday when I received the Amazing Facts letter, announcing their decision to send the tithe on to church leaders. Then, yesterday afternoon, a friend in southern California telephoned. She said she was convicted to call and read me something over the phone. It helped explain the problem I was puzzling over. Here it is:

“Joe was forthright in his witness. Books such as *Creeping Compromise* and *Reaping the Whirlwind* did not mince words against the rampaging apostasy in our midst. This did not endear his ministry to many church administrators . . . The opposition to his godly ministry escalated in proportion to the growing apostasy in our church. Yet Joe strove ever to work with the administrators of God’s church. His board chairman remained the president of the Chesapeake Conference. Joe was deeply grieved by the recent publication by the *Review and Herald* of the book, *The Nature of Christ*, written by one of the associate editors of the Adventist Review. This book attacked Joe’s Bible-based stand on the human nature of Christ and named him and others, including Ralph Larson, Ron Spear, Robert Wieland, Donald Short, Colin Standish, and myself many times.

“Ever accommodating to the needs of the organized church, Joe found that more and more ecclesiastical pressure was exerted upon his ministry as time progressed. What had commenced as a sweet relationship between a self-supporting ministry and the church organization de-

veloped into a near battle to resist total control. Facts has been fully self-sustaining, (dependent on donations alone) for twenty years. If it cannot withstand the pressure, who can? Consider Quiet Hour, Adventist Pioneer Missions, E-VAN-gelism, or any other quasi-independent organization you wish to name—which, to date, retains official church approval. Every such organization will have to cave in and send certain funds on to the conference for the four-way split. This is heart-wrenching,

veloped into a near battle to resist total control.

“Joe’s great love for, and admiration and support of, the work of fellow self-supporting ministries such as Hartland and Hope International were sources of consternation to some church administrators. Joe ever kept a close personal contact with these ministries by telephone and in person. But little by little he was pressured to resign from the board of Hartland Institute [which he did] in 1992, and the same year to present his final messages at the Hartland camp meeting. Joe found that cooperation with the organization was becoming coercion. Articles for *Our Firm Foundation* written by Amazing Facts evangelists had to be published under pseudonyms, and when the latest graduates from Hartland joined his team, Joe faced stern opposition which he courageously resisted. But he was forced to make no mention of the faithful college which had prepared them for service.

“The four Hartland graduates in his evangelistic team were unable to return to their alma mater to present requested weeks of prayer because of conference bigotry. These and other pressures weighed heavily on the heart of Joe, as did the pressure exerted upon him to cease his 25-year practice of receiving tithe for his valid ministry.”—*Russell Standish, circular letter.*

Elder Joe Crews was recuperating well from a coronary problem when, on the morning of October 10, 1994, he died suddenly in a Seventh-day Adventist hospital.

(A few brave ones may, instead, just send the tithe back with a note: “We do not accept tithe.”)

**Second**, church leaders are obviously trying to gain control of every denominational entity they can,—and ostracize and ban each one which refuses to bow to their demands, regardless of how dishonest those demands might be. The criterion of acceptance is not souls won to Christ, but submission to leadership.

**Third**, the demands never cease. As the organizations bow to one demand, another is being formulated in committee. By this time it is quite clear that there are church leaders who do not want simply to gain more control,—they want to change our doctrines, our standards, our very way of thinking. We have found they are even willing to resort to hypnotic procedures to do it.

Think not that control of the money is the only objective. Control of beliefs is another.

In the case of Amazing Facts, I must say they are telling you just what the situation is. They are trying to do the best they can, in the midst of a bitter compromise. There are other organizations which probably will not do this. They will quietly be passing along the funds to enrich the local conference in which their headquarters is located, and their supporters will not be the wiser.

Here is the North American Division ruling in brief:

1. This policy was approved by the North American Division in 1992.

2. This policy applies to any approved and subsidized church-controlled organization (such as Voice of Prophecy, It is Written, Faith

Continued on the next tract

More WAYMARKS - from —  
**PILGRIMS REST**

HCR 77, BOX 38A - BEERSHEBA SPRINGS, TN 37305

# The NAD Tithe Misappropriation Policy

## Part Two of Three

Continued from the preceding tract in this series —

for Today, Breath of Life, Hour of Prophecy, etc.), or to any approved, but not church subsidized, quasi church-controlled organization (Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, etc.).

3. This policy requires that all known tithe, which is sent in to such organizations from Seventh-day Adventist believers, MUST be forwarded to the local conference office.

4. This policy requires that a receipt for the tithe money is to be issued by the organization to the donor who sent it, but that the money itself is to be used by church entities to which it was not sent.

5. This policy requires that the local conference, upon receiving such funds, is to carefully divide it, retaining a portion to use locally, and sending on the other three portions, as follows:

69% - goes to the local conference.

10% - goes to the union conference.

11% - goes to the North American Division.

10% - goes to the General Conference.

0% - goes to the organization the donor sent the contribution to.

Frankly, now, if you were a Jesuit infiltrator, what would be one of the best ways to destroy Adventist missionary work? Simple, enough, get church leadership to require that the most active missionary projects send much of their money to church headquarters, where it can be used for other purposes.

In the case of Amazing Facts, of the money sent on, 59% will be returned from the conference (which will withhold 10% for retirement)

and 10% from the union. But the North American Division and General Conference both refuse to remit any, because, they say, to do so would “set a dangerous precedent.”

We ask: What is “dangerous” about being honest with the people, and letting them send their donations where they want to send them? What is wrong with letting their money be used for those purposes which the contributors prayerfully have decided it should be used for? What is evil about letting the Holy Spirit have some say in the lives of the people?

I say it is wrong of the General Conference, working with the North American Division to enact such a policy, then require it of all trustfully dependent church entities, and then, brazenly, to declare that it would be “dangerous” for the people’s money to be used for the purposes they specified!

At the heart of many corrupt church policies, is the notion that church members have no sense, and church leaders must think for them. But that is a Romish principle. Read again chapter 37 in *Great Controversy*.

Such high-handed policy irregularities with funds need reproof. If the General Conference and North American Division make regulations such as these, how can we trust that they will be honest with other funds handed over for other purposes the donors want them used for? Is this some kind of game we are playing? Is it imagined that the church members are stupid enough they cannot see through policies—and detect the false-hearted accounting procedures they are based on. Is this just another manifestation of the new theology principles which have been accepted by leadership, as stated in the *Review* and *Ministry* maga-

zine and in these new doctrinal books? If men believe they can sin and still be saved, they are ready to enact policies that cause subordinate organizations to sin also. There seems to be no stopping point. It goes on and on.

If the General Conference, working through the North American Division, can enact a deceptive, misleading, property theft—which is what this policy is,—then they must be doing other dishonest things also.

The North American Division takes the property belonging to others, and blackens the name of those who refuse to be accomplices in the fraudulent operation.

King David had done a great crime. He had taken property belonging to another, and then had the owner slain.

Nathan, the prophet, told him the story of a wealthy man who stole his poor neighbor’s lone sheep, instead of getting one from his abundant herds.—The story fits, my friend, the story fits! Write the General Conference, and every other church entity you can think of, and express your disgust with this monstrous disfigurement of tithe paying.

When David heard the story, he said the man ought to die. The Bible says it is wrong to steal (*Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19; Matt 19:18; Luke 18:20; Rom 13:9*).

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely . . . Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him.”—*Leviticus 19:11, 13*.

It is wrong for church leaders to hand over goods which are neither their property, nor were donated to them.

“When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him.”—*Psalms 50:18*.

God does not speak lightly of such activities.

“The bands [binding policies] of the wicked have robbed me.”—*Psalms 119:61*.

These men take the lone sheep of others, in order to avoid using their own sheep.

“Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; but [even] if he shall be found, he shall restore sevenfold.”—*Proverbs 6:30-31*.

It is terrible to use stolen donations, and call it “the Lord’s work.”

“For I the Lord love judgment; I hate robbery for burnt offering.”—*Isaiah 61:8*.

Such activities will bring shame to the participants. Indeed, all of us will be ashamed that our church will be doing this.

“As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed.”—*Jeremiah 2:26*.

If continued, it will lead to final destruction.

“The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them.”—*Proverbs 21:7*.

Will leaders of the church steal dedicated funds, ruin the reputation of those who resist, unite with those holding false doctrine, and bow down to other churches,—and then declare that they have a right to do this because they are church leaders? Read this:

“Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, . . . and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?”—*Jeremiah 7:9-10*.

God’s Word speaks stronger than we do.

“Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery.”—*Nahum 3:1*.

“Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.”—

*Matthew 21:13 (Luke 19:45-46)*.

“Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren . . . Nor thieves, nor covetous, . . . nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”—*1 Corinthians 6:8, 10*.

If a bigger boy at school taunted a smaller boy, and told him he was going to take his lunch tomorrow, we would call that bullying. If he took it from him the next day, we would call that stealing. But if the General Conference does it to a little missionary group of Advent believers, the evil deed is whitewashed with the name, “policymaking.”

To consider the gravity of this situation, consider an individual who decides to send a special donation to a non-profit organization. Those who receive it, know they will get in trouble with church leadership if they accept it. What should they do? Since policy rules their decisions, they ought to return it with the printed statement, “We are not permitted by church leadership to accept your donation.”

But church leadership, hearing about it, tells them, “No, don’t do that; send the money over to us to spend!” Why do they say that? Because church leadership does not want to lose money which does not belong to them!

Wait a minute! That is why people go to gambling casinos! to get money that does not belong to them! That is why people rob banks.

We have here a very serious violation of the law of God. God will judge for these things, and He wants the facts set before many minds. If men, unless they repent, are going to burn in hellfire for defrauding an entire church, should they not be warned about it? Should you not be warned also? Moses cried to the people, “Get away from the tents of those men!” Beware, beware, the wrath of God is coming.

Did anything of this nature occur while Ellen White was alive? Yes, it did—an incident so remarkably similar that it needs to be discussed.

Elder G.F. Watson became president of the Colorado Conference in the year 1900. In 1905, Ellen White sent an important letter to Elder Watson. Here is the background of the letter:

Several self-supporting workers began a project in the southern states which church leaders in Battle Creek did not like. The workers were evangelizing blacks, as well as carrying on other projects which were not under the control of Battle Creek or its subsidiary entities. Therefore, church leaders considered them “an enemy.”

Ellen White wrote many letters to those self-supporting southern workers, encouraging them to continue their work. Indeed, she was the one who had encouraged them to start a self-supporting work. (You will find many of those letters in the **Unpublished Testimonies**, also known as the *Spalding-Magan Collection*. A copy of that book may be obtained from us for \$27.50, hardcover, or \$13.50, paperback, plus postage and handling. That, is the current price. By the way, this book is not “unpublished;” the present writer bought his first published copy of it in the mid-1950s. It has been in print for decades.

In addition to encouraging them to continue on with a work which should be done, which the church leaders would not do, she urged them to tell the people of their needs, since the leaders refused to provide them with any financial help. Ellen White had a way of knowing things, and she told them that donations sent to them through regular church channels would not be sent on to them. (Sound familiar? Now it is reversed; donations sent to the quasi independents must be sent on to the church.)

# The NAD Tithe Misappropriation Policy \_\_\_\_\_ 7

So, following her instructions, the workers in the south decided to bypass the leadership—and take their needs directly to the Advent believers.

They began writing letters of appeal and mailing them out. That brought in some funds, for which both they and Ellen White were thankful. In addition, in late 1904 several of them traveled as far west as Colorado. They spoke of their needs and appealed for funds. Among the donations they received was tithe money. Returning with the funds to their area, they spent them.

They were working in accordance with Spirit of Prophecy counsels, and deserved encouragement and support which church leaders did not wish to grant them.

When Elder G.F. Watson, the Colorado Conference president, heard about this, he wrote a letter to the workers and demanded that they send the tithe back. His logic was exactly that of the NAD policy, enacted in 1992: The tithe belongs to church leadership, and no one else can spend it. However, that viewpoint is not supported either by the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy.

It is church teaching that tithe must go through “the regular channel,” But Ellen White declared that claim to be incorrect.

“Appeal to the people . . . Have this money come direct to your destitute portion of the vineyard. The Lord has not specified any regular channel through which means shall pass.”—*Spalding-Magan (“Unpublished”) Testimonies, 498.*

As usual, Ellen White knew what had happened. The workers had already spent the money and did not know what to do. She encouraged them to keep pressing forward.

But, in addition, Ellen White wrote to the Colorado Conference president.

The Watson Letter, as it is called, is printed on pages 214-215 of the book, ***Unpublished Testimonies.***

It is also printed in a special two-part tract set, available from us, entitled, ***The Tithe—1-2 [PG—41-42].*** That tract set contains a great wealth of Spirit of Prophecy quotations on this topic. You will value it highly.

In the Colorado incident, we find an almost perfect parallel to the present situation:

(1) Workers from—not partially but—*totally* independent ministries, who were carrying on a necessary work, told the believers of their work and their needs. / Self-supporting organizations today—controlled, subsidized, subservient, or totally independent—are doing the same.

(2) Tithe money was, and continues to be, given to such ministries.

(3) The conference president demanded that the tithe money be returned to the church. / The North American Division demands that the tithe money be returned to the church.

(4) Ellen White told the conference president that it was perfectly alright for church members to give tithe directly to totally independent ministries, that it need not be returned, that she herself regularly did it, and that she commended others who did it. / It is not difficult to guess what her letter to the NAD would say.

Since we are now on the topic of the Watson Letter, here is a brief analysis of what she told Elder Watson in that letter:

1—Elder Watson should not oppose the giving of tithe money to independent workers, and, in fact, should be quiet about the entire matter (*paragraph 1*).

2—Ellen White had herself not paid tithe into the church for years, but instead had given it to independent and retired workers. She did it because it was right to do, and because God instructed her to do

it (*paragraphs 2, 4-5*).

3—She had done this for years, and could testify that it was a proper method of paying the tithe (*paragraphs 2, 5*).

4—In addition, she did not discourage or dissuade others from doing this also, that is, directly supporting self-supporting workers with their tithe (*paragraph 5*).

5—The standard reply by church leaders to the Watson Letter is that “Ellen White could do this because she was a prophet, but no one else should do it.” Yet, in contrast, in this letter we find her commending the faithful believers who were also paying their tithe directly to independent workers. She also said that God has appointed others to pay their tithe in this way, as well as her (*paragraph 5*).

6—She commended those who had given their tithe directly to independent workers, because it was being used “where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone” (*paragraph 5*).

7—According to her statement, there are activities and fields that “have been robbed” of needed means, and this lack should be supplied by sending tithe directly to independent workers (*paragraph 3*).

8—She never reproved others for doing as she did in this matter, but rather commended them (*paragraph 5*).

9—When others asked her opinion, as to whether they too should give their tithe direct to independent workers, she advised them that it was an acceptable practice, if they were so convicted by God to do so (*paragraph 5*).

10—But she also cautioned that no one should make a practice of trying to “gather up the tithe”; that is, asking that others give it to them (*paragraphs 6, 13*). It is a basic Spirit of Prophecy principle that each person should decide for himself where his tithe should go, and then send it there.

No one is to make that decision for him. It is a decision between him and God, just as is worship and the choosing of one's religion. It is wrong for any individual or organization to say that the tithe must go to them! *Beware of anyone who comes, asking for your tithe!* They may present their needs, but they should not be asking for your tithe. It is your sacred responsibility to decide that, and no coercion is to be applied. No one, including church leaders, are to try to "gather up the tithe"; that is, get it exclusively coming to them.

Yet that is exactly what the North American Division policy is trying to do.

11—Those believers who are convinced that they should place their funds with self-supporting workers, rather than with the conference and its salaried workers, should do so (*paragraph 6*).

12—Neither the officers of the church, nor its salaried workers, should seek to dissuade them from paying their tithe outside its own committee-approved channels, nor should it in any way threaten or penalize those who are convicted by the Spirit of God to do so (*paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7*).

13—When the conference brethren learn of instances in which believers are giving their tithe to independent workers, they should "hold their peace" and be quiet about the matter, not seeking to oppose it (*paragraph 3*).

14—But (and this is important) only those should pay their tithe outside the regular channels who are convicted they should do it (*paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6*). The One who impresses the heart to pay tithe, will guide His people where they are to pay it. No one else is to decide it for you. We should pray over our tithe, just as we pray over the proper utilization of all our other talents.

15—The ones who should be supported by paying the tithe di-

rectly to them, rather than paying it through regular church channels, are only to be those who are doing the right work, and who are not officially funded by the church in carrying on that work (*paragraph 2*).

16—Tithe given directly by believers to independent, self-supporting workers "is not withheld" (*paragraph 4*). Throughout the Spirit of Prophecy, the consistent teaching is that tithe is "withheld" when it is not paid out at all, and that tithe is "not withheld" when it is paid out.

17—Tithe so given goes directly into "the Lord's treasury" (*paragraph 4*). This is a very important point. It is alleged, by the leaders, that only that tithe which is paid into the conference offering plates—goes into "the treasury." But, according to paragraph 4, tithe paid directly to self-supporting workers or organizations also goes into "the treasury."

18—There is a special factor in considering where the tithe should be sent: "where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone" (*paragraph 5*). Is it a work which God wants done, which is not otherwise being done—either by the official church, its entities, or workers.

19—The tithe of the believers may be given to independent organizations and workers, simply because of a loss of confidence in the main church, its leadership, the direction they are headed, and how they are misappropriating the tithe given them (*paragraph 6*).

20—"Circumstances alter cases." This is also wise counsel. Only through continual prayer can you know what you are to do in this matter. One missionary project is not as another, and changes often occur. The privilege of paying tithe is to be a thoughtful blessing, not a unthinking routine.

21—In summary of the entire matter, Ellen White stated: "I commend those sisters who have

placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone."

*Here now is the complete text of the Watson Letter:*

Mountain View, California  
January 22, 1905

Elder Watson:

My brother, I wish to say to you, be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be.

It had been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and to supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way.

In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers of that field. If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace.

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do to this; and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a

# The NAD Tithe Misappropriation Policy

Part Three of Three

Continued from the preceding tract in this series —

matter that should be commented upon; for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best.

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is left undone; and if this matter is given publicity, it will create knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do.

I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that any should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it and told them how it was appropriated.

I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow this example.

(signed) Ellen G. White

Our heartfelt sympathies are

with the captive organizations. Surely, they need our prayers! Please pray for Amazing Facts, and all the ministries tied closely to the North American Division and General Conference. The lines of control are becoming stronger every day.

Where are we headed? How long before Jesus returns? From every indication we can obtain, determined efforts will be made at the forthcoming 1995 General Conference Session to greatly strengthen (1) conference control over members, and (2) General Conference control over divisions, unions, and conferences. Yet it is the General Conference which is working urgently to promote Celebration worship services, mid-week cell groups, variant doctrinal books, and conference-level disfellowshippings.

My brother, my sister, stand true. We are near the end. Please, Lord Jesus, please, come quickly!  
—Vance Ferrell

At the 1889 General Conference Session, the leadership of our denomination was pushing earnestly to make the Seventh-day Adventist Church into a great business corporation, with all entities and workers answerable directly or indirectly to the General Conference headquarters, which at that time was located in Battle Creek, Michigan.

The idea of placing all institutions under a single general manager seemed like a good idea. President O.A. Olsen said it clearly in a keynote address to the Session on October 28:

“This work as a whole is all one. Why should not our various denominational enterprises be managed by boards, elected by the General Conference?”—*1891 General Conference Bulletin*.

Olsen added that the good work should begin by placing all North American publishing houses under General Conference control. On Monday, November 4, a 21-member com-

mittee of top leaders was appointed to consider the matter. Two days later, the committee presented a lengthy recommendation, which included this item:

“That steps be taken at once to form a corporation for the purpose of taking entire control of all our publishing interests, thus bringing the work under one general management.”

The decision was deferred to the 1991 General Conference Session, at which time the committee said its recommendation was that the work as a whole would be “simplified” if a single entity (the General Conference) had wide-ranging control of the work and the institutions.

Because Ellen White counseled strongly against it, the matter was again put off; this time to the 1895 Session. In the interim, Ellen White sent out warning letters.

“I have little faith in the large or small confederacy that is being formed. It looks dark and forbidding to me. There is need of great care and wisdom in carrying forward the work.”—*Letter 71, 1894, GCB, 18*.

In spite of her warnings, mailed from Australia, the leaders voted to bring all publishing work under Battle Creek control. By 1895, they wanted to take over all other branches of the work as well. But the warnings continued.

“To my brethren at Battle Creek, I would say, You are not in any condition to consolidate. This means nothing less than placing upon the institutions at Battle Creek the management of all the work, far and near. God’s work cannot be carried forward successfully by men who, by their resistance to light, have placed themselves where nothing will influence them to repent or change their course of action.”—*Letter 81, 1896*.

—A far more detailed historical study, along with many, many Spirit of Prophecy statements, are to be found in our three-part tract set, **Confederation and Consolidation [RS—17-19]**, now available only in section two of our **Medical/Publishing Tractbook**.