

“Hovering” and a few extras in EGW’s writings

~Compiled by Pastor Daniel R. Mesa III~

As I traveled through the South on my way to the conference, I saw city after city that was unworked. What is the matter? The ministers are hovering over churches which know the truth while thousands are perishing out of Christ. {Ev 381.2}

If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them. {Ev 381.3}

They should be taught to bring a faithful tithe to God, that He may strengthen and bless them. They should be brought into working order, that the breath of God may come to them. They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again.--Manuscript 150, 1901.

Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: "Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 30. (1900) {Ev 382.1}

As a general rule, the conference laborers should go out from the churches into new fields, using their God-given ability to a purpose in seeking and saving the lost.--Letter 136, 1902. {Ev 382.2}

Our ministers should plan wisely, as faithful stewards. They should feel that it is not their duty to hover over the churches already raised up, but that they should be doing aggressive evangelistic work, preaching the Word and doing house-to-house work in places that have not yet heard the truth. . . . They will find that nothing is so encouraging as doing evangelistic work in new fields. --Letter 169, 1904. {Ev 382.3}

If the ministers would get out of the way, if they would go forth into new fields, the members would be obliged to bear responsibilities, and their capabilities would increase by use.--Letter 56, 1901. {Ev 382.4}

We feel pained beyond measure to see some of our ministers hovering about the churches, apparently putting forth some little effort, but having next to nothing to show for their labors. The field is the world. Let them go out into the unbelieving world, and labor to convert souls to the truth. {GW92 68.2}

My heart has been filled with sadness as I have looked over the field and seen the barren places. What does this mean? Who are standing as representatives of Jesus Christ? Who feels a burden for the souls who cannot receive the truth till it is brought to them? Our

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ministers are hovering over the churches, as though the angel of mercy was not making efforts to save souls. {PaM 99.3}

God holds these ministers responsible for the souls of those who are in darkness. He does not call you to go into fields that need no physician. Establish your churches with the understanding that they need not expect the minister to wait upon them and to be continually feeding them. They have the truth; they know what truth is. They should have root in themselves. These should strike down deeply, that they may reach up higher and still higher. They must be rooted and grounded in the faith. EGW'88 1752. {PaM 100.1}

There is too much hovering round our institutions; too much ease-loving. The commission of Christ is to be carried out to the letter. God's people must consecrate to Him their means and their capabilities. The faithful soldiers of the cross of Christ are to go forth without the camp, bearing the reproach and following in the path of self-denial trodden by the Redeemer.--RH, Feb. 9, 1905. {PM 47.2}

The world is to be warned. Ministers should work earnestly and devotedly, opening new fields and engaging in personal labor for souls, instead of hovering over the churches that already have great light and many advantages. (256) {7T 255.3}

The people of God who have had light and knowledge have not carried out the high and holy purposes of God. They have not advanced from victory to victory, adding new territory, lifting up the standard in the cities and their suburbs. Great spiritual blindness has been shown by those who have had great light flashed upon them by the Lord, but who have not advanced in the light to greater and still greater light. Church members have not been encouraged to use spiritual nerve and muscle in the work of advancement. They should be made to understand that ministers cannot work out their salvation by hovering over them. It is thus that they are made weaklings when they ought to be strong men. {9T 139.2}

In every church young men and young women should be selected to bear responsibilities. Let them make every effort to qualify themselves to help those who know not the truth. God calls for earnest, whole-souled workers. The humble and contrite will learn by personal experience that beside Him there is no savior.

Hovering Over the Churches [SPECIAL
TESTIMONIES TO MINISTERS AND WORKERS,
(SERIES A, NO. 4, 1895), PAGES 4-10.]

Cooranbong, Australia, September 1, 1895.

Dear Brother and Sister-----:

Brother-----laid out before me the plans for meetings to be held for weeks in different places among those who know the truth. Doubtless some who have newly come to the faith would be benefited, but I know you are not on the right track. Some of those called together will no doubt have their faith strengthened and confirmed; but this work is not bearing the message of warning to those who are still in darkness and error, who know not the truth. Time is passing, the perils of the last days are upon us; and how many will say to us in the last great day when every man shall receive according to his works: Why

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have you not warned us? You have not told us those things that we should have known. {TM 230.1}

Christ says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Let our ministers go forth weighted with the solemn message of warning. When men have had every advantage to obtain a knowledge of the truth, how shall plans be laid to keep our laborers from the work of saving souls in the darkness of error? The time is short. Let the message of warning be given clear and distinct. The Lord is coming to execute judgment upon all who obey not the gospel. {TM 230.2}

Enoch in his day sounded the proclamation of the coming of Christ and the execution of judgment upon the unrighteous; and we now see the fulfillment of Enoch's prophecy concerning the great wickedness that should abound. But these who have the light are the very ones commissioned of God to make constantly aggressive warfare. As the inquiry shall be made, "Watchman, what of the night?" the faithful message is to be heard in response, "The morning cometh, and also the night." {TM 230.3}

The influence of truth is too much restricted. Let men who know the truth be urged to communicate truth to those who are in darkness. Many are satisfied with a view of truth, but they have not yet stepped into their place to communicate that which they have received. God has let men feel the power of truth, but they are not all doing their appointed work in seeking to save that which was lost. Everyone is to have the armor on, prepared to win others to obedience to the law of God. I see so much given to those who already have; these wonderful meetings for those who wish to get more strength are depriving the world of the very work that should be done. Our ministers should now be working for the saving of the lost. The weeks spent in gatherings to fit men for work might better, far better, be spent in going to the highways and hedges with the proclamation, "Come; for all things are now ready." {TM 231.1}

To those who obey the light they have, illumination will come from on high; for the heavenly messengers are waiting to cooperate with men in warning a deceived, sinful world. When the people of God engage in this work with real travail of soul there will be manifest a decided change in cities and villages. This hovering about churches to keep them propped up makes them more dependent on human effort. They learn to lean on the experience of their fellowmen and do not make God their dependence and their efficiency. It is time that cities and villages everywhere were hearing the solemn note of warning, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Get ready that you may be found of Him in peace. {TM 231.2}

In all lines of ministerial work there is need of greater earnestness. Time is passing, and work that should be far advanced is almost at a standstill. Ministers are not to spend their time hovering over the churches, laboring for those who have already accepted the truth. They are to go forth to proclaim the message to those who have not heard it. They must sow the seeds of truth in fields that have not yet been sown. {AUCR, July 15, 1902 par. 1} Work is to be done in various ways. Humble men, willing to make sacrifices, to work as Christ worked, are needed. Church members are to be taught to work in the Lord's home vineyard. {AUCR, July 15, 1902 par. 2}

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Now I wish to say, We want the people to take hold of the work with interest. In every Church where there is a minister, he is to be a shepherd, not hovering over those in the Church, but taking workers with him, he is to go into the places around. {GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 35}

If our ministers, instead of hovering over the churches to keep the breath of life in them, would go forth to work for those outside the fold, those in the churches would receive the vital current from heaven as they hear that souls were drawn to the Lamb of God. They would pray that God would give power to the workers, and their prayers would be as sharp sickles in the harvest fields. {GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 43}

I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work. The work of a minister is to minister. Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering. It has been presented to me that all through America there are barren fields. As I traveled through the South on my way to the Conference, I saw city after city that was unworked. What is the matter? The ministers are hovering over churches, which know the truth, while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them. They should be taught to bring a faithful tithe to God, that he may strengthen and bless them. They should be brought into working order, that the breath of God may come to them. They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again. {GCB, April 12, 1901 par. 21}

The world is to be warned. Ministers should work earnestly and devotedly, opening new fields and engaging in personal labor for souls instead of hovering over the churches that already have great light and many advantages. In view of the fact we are living so near the close of this earth's history, there should be greater thoroughness in labor, more vigilant waiting, watching, praying, and working. {IR, January 20, 1904 par. 5}

We shall meet opposition arising from selfish motives and from bigotry and prejudice, yet with undaunted courage and living faith, we should sow beside all waters. The agents of Satan are formidable; we shall meet them and must combat them. Our labors are not to be confined to our own country. The field is the world; the harvest is ripe. The command given the disciples just before he ascended was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." We feel pained beyond measure to see some of our ministers hovering about the churches, apparently putting forth some little effort, but having next to nothing to show for their labors. The field is the world. Let them go out to the unbelieving world and labor to convert souls to the truth.

The Lord's vineyard is a more extensive one than the present working force is able properly to cultivate. Therefore it is necessary that every one should labor to the full extent of his ability. Whosoever refuses to do this, dishonors the Lord of the vineyard,

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and if he continues inactive, the Lord will disown him. As the human agent endeavors to labor, God works in him and by him. When the Lord sees that little real effort for the conversion of souls is put forth in regions beyond, when He sees that golden opportunities are lost, and that the spiritual physician is devoting his energy and skill to those who are whole, neglecting the maladies of those who are ready to die, He is not pleased. He cannot pronounce the "well done" upon such work; for it is not hastening but hindering the progress of his cause, when rapid advancement is most necessary. Time and energy and means are devoted to those who know the truth, instead of being used to enlighten the ignorant. Our churches are being tended as though they were sick lambs by those who should be seeking for the lost sheep. If our people would minister to other souls who need their help, they would themselves be ministered unto by the Chief Shepherd, and thousands would be rejoicing in the fold who are now wandering in the desert. Instead of hovering over our people, let every soul go to work to seek and to save the lost. Let every soul labor, not in visiting among our churches, but in visiting the dark places of the earth where there are no churches. {RH, June 25, 1895 par. 6}

In places where the standard of truth has never been lifted, more souls will be converted as a result of the same amount of work than ever before. The Lord Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth. If you will draw upon it, combining the strength of Heaven with your own, precious souls will be converted. The presence of the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed to all. Christ, our Mediator, renews our strength by the power of his presence. Every agency is to be set in operation, not to work for the churches, but to work for those who are in the darkness of error. When souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger. It is by meeting opposing influences that we become confirmed in the faith. As the light shines into their hearts, let them diffuse its rays. Teach the newly converted that they are to enter into fellowship with Christ, to be his witnesses, and to make him known unto the world. None should be forward to enter into controversy, but they should tell the simple story of the love of Jesus. All should constantly search the Scriptures for the reason of their faith, so that, if asked, they may give "a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear." The best medicine you can give the church is not preaching or sermonizing, but planning work for them. If set to work, the despondent would soon forget their despondency, the weak would become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all would be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus. They would find an unfailing helper in him who has promised to save all who come unto him. (Concluded next week.) {RH, Ju 25, 1895}

This work must be more extended. There must be far less hovering about the churches. Many are spiritually weak because they have not let the light which God has given them shine forth to the world. They have not connected with Christ, and become channels of blessing. God's people must read and practice his word for themselves. In the place of depending upon ministers, they must learn to place their trust in God. He exhorts them to "stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." {RH, January 19, 1897 par. 9}

There are many who desire to see souls coming to a knowledge of the truth; but who among us are engaged in real, earnest work for the Lord? Who, with earnest, humble

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faith, are bringing souls to him by visiting, by conversing, and by explaining the Scriptures? The sacrifice that we ourselves are willing to make for the good of others is what will convince them of our sincerity. Says one: "I felt so great an interest and love for the souls of the people who know not the truth, that I gave up my home, my church, my family and friends, and gave my whole life to labor for their salvation. They know that I love them." This is doing as Christ did. Our lives will be a testimony that will speak louder than words. As Christ's followers, we are called to self-denial and self-sacrifice. He has said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." {RH, January 19, 1897 par. 10}

The ministers who are hovering over the churches, preaching to those who know the truth, would better go into places still in darkness. Unless they do this, they themselves and their congregations will become dwarfed. Our religion has become weak and sickly because the members of the church have left their first love. They might be strong men and women in Christ if they would obey the Lord's directions. {RH, February 9, 1905 par. 12}

The coming of these people to Christ and their conversion to the truth was an object-lesson to the disciples, and it should teach an important lesson to all who are engaged in the work of soul saving. From it ministers should learn that God desires them to go forth into aggressive labor, that He has not given them the work of hovering over the churches, when close by there are souls who are perishing for lack of knowledge. {ST, December 4, 1901 par. 3}

The time that has been used in preaching to our churches has not strengthened them, but has made them weak and helpless, to be fed with milk and not with meat. God has been calling upon His ministers to leave the ninety and nine and hunt for the lost sheep. Your experience is to be a lesson for all who are hovering over the churches--consumers and not producers. We tell you to put your trust in God. Let Him guide you. The Lord Jesus is answering your prayers.--Letter 132, 1901, p. 8. (To S. N. Haskell and wife, October 7, 1901.) {10MR 227.3}

The Lord's great vineyard demands from men that which it has not yet received--earnest, persevering labor for souls. The ministry is becoming weak and feeble, and under their tame service the churches also are becoming weak. The ministers of our conferences have very little to show in the conversion of souls as a result of their labors. These things are depriving God of the glory which belongs to Him. The truth is not carried into the barren places of the earth. God calls for workers who will be producers. There is a world to be warned. Why are the ministers who should be laboring in special service earnestly to open new fields and raise up new churches, hovering over the churches which have already received great light and many advantages which they do not appreciate? {13MR 208.4}

During the night season I was speaking in a large congregation. We have been instructed by the Lord that the medical missionary work is to be to the work of the third

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angel's message as the right hand to the body. The right hand is used to open doors through which the body may find entrance. This is the part the medical missionary work is to act. It is to largely prepare the way for the reception of the truth for this time. A body without hands is useless. In giving honor to the body, honor must also be given to the helping hands, which are agencies of such importance that without them the body can do nothing. Therefore the body which treats indifferently the right hand, refusing its aid, is able to accomplish nothing. {13MR 209.1}

This is the lesson the ministers must learn before they can accomplish the work of God has appointed them. God has not given those who know the truth the work of hovering over the churches when there are souls close by them who are perishing for lack of knowledge. {14MR 141.1}

We have had the most successful camp meeting that has been held in New South Wales. It exceeded anything we had hoped. The light of the third angel's message has penetrated many dark places. We need every day a living connection with God. Our faith is not as strong as it should be. As a people we are not as devotional as we should be. We have great light, great opportunities, great privileges, and we now need to walk with the light and have a faith proportionate to the great and living truths we are handling. We must not trust in our own powers or in the powers and smartness of our speakers. We must lean our whole weight upon One who can help us in every emergency. Our work is aggressive; there must be no halting. There must be less, far less, hovering about the churches, and far more lifting the standard in new fields. Our ministers must give the trumpet a certain sound, lifting up Jesus and saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." {15MR 8.3}

The light of truth must flash forth upon the pathway of many who have never heard the message of warning. We want light to go forth everywhere. I am pleading for physical strength, mental clearness, and spiritual power. The Lord is my helper. He can be my efficiency. He will be our strength. We have no time to lose. The end of all things is at hand.--Letter 51, 1897, pages 1-3.