

# Diverging Paths

Can Two Walk Together?

# **Sowing the Seeds**

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**—*Review and Herald* , May 29, 1894**

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**“Yesterday it all opened before me that in this very line of hospitality, I have been repeatedly shown that we can unite the people with us, and can have twofold influence over them. This was unfolded before me in the first experience in this work, many years back, and we have ever linked our interest with humanity.”**

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*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 16, 69*

# The Path of Influence

**“On Sabbath afternoon, May 12 [1894], a special meeting of the North Fitzroy church was held to consider the Christian Help work. Bro. Daniells conducted the meeting, and cited his hearers to the example of Christ, who “went about doing good,” ministering to the suffering body as well as to the sin-sick soul. Bro. Semmens, who has had considerable experience in this work in America, told how the work is done there. Sister Ingels gave some examples of practical Christian work in Prahran.**

# The Path of Influence

**“The objects of the Christian Help Bands are, 1. To minister to the sick; 2. To provide for the needy; 3. To comfort the distressed; 4. To uplift the fallen; 5. To lead to Christ the unconverted. This work has been entered upon heartily in North Fitzroy. Between fifty and sixty persons have enrolled their names as volunteers. Five bands of ten persons each (including the leader) have been organized, and have commenced work. Already a large number of needy cases have been found, and there are calls for food, clothing, and bedding. Some of these wants have been met, and others will be promptly.**

# The Path of Influence

**“A committee was appointed to solicit contributions, and encouraging offers of help have been received, including a donation of two guineas from a member of the Fitzroy city council.**

**We look for good results.”**

*—Bible Echo, May 28, 1894*

# The Path of Influence

**“Some five months ago the Christian Help work was started under the leadership of brother Semmens. Seven bands were organized. The locality around the Echo office for some distance was divided into districts, with one band to each. Each district had two lady visitors, whose duty it was to make investigation and determine what help should be given to the destitute cases reported. Through this means many of the poor and needy have had their wants relieved and the gospel preached unto them.**

# The Path of Influence

**“During the past six months there has been a greater interest manifested in this church in the missionary meetings than for years past, and the attendance has been increased fourfold.”**

**—Anna L. Ingels, *Review and Herald*, December 4, 1894**

# The Path of Influence

**“I am more and more satisfied that the plans on which Elder Corliss is endeavoring to work, are in harmony with Apostolic methods. We have been very much encouraged by the growth in wisdom and in efficiency of the young men who are working with him, and we are much pleased with the results of their labors. There is now such a demand for Bible readings upon the part of the people to whom we have been distributing the printed sermons that we shall arrange to release Brethren Semmens and Pallant from the work of distribution, that they may spend their entire energies in holding readings.**

**—Letter, W.C. White to O.A. Olsen, August 20, 1895**

# The Path of Influence

**“For some months they [A.W. Semmens and his wife, Emma] have been laboring in Sydney and its suburbs. He combines the work of a colporteur-evangelist and a missionary-nurse, and his labors are very effective. He is becoming one of the best Bible workers we have, and I think he is being much benefited by the course of instruction [in how to give ‘Bible Readings’] he is receiving from Elder Corliss.”**

**—Letter, W.C. White to Elder Robert Hare, November 20, 1896**



## **A United Work**

**“We have been taught by the example of Christ, and by the Testimonies that have been repeatedly given to our brethren in the ministry, and to the physicians and managers of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the Health Retreat, that the work of the gospel minister and of the physician should be combined; that the minister should have a care for the physical prosperity of his flock, that the physician should be a true minister of Christ, laboring for the health of the soul as well as for the body.**

# **A United Work**

**“With this instruction in view I have felt that our brethren made a grave mistake when they put a check upon our ministers from teaching health reform, and called for specialists to do that work. It would have been better if the specialists had been employed to teach the ministers, so that their work with the people would have been more effective.**

# **A United Work**

**“I have felt that it was just as grave an error for Dr. Kellogg to make everything of the health work, and belittle the evangelistic work, as he virtually does by magnifying the one so far above the other.**

## **A United Work**

**“I have felt that his criticisms were largely out of place regarding the work of Brother Semmens during the past two years, because in treating the matter as though Semmens was not fulfilling his mission while dividing his time between evangelical and nursing work, he virtually says that persons trained in the health work must make that their exclusive business; and thus he does just what the [General] Conference did in putting asunder that which God has joined together.”**

**—Letter, W.C. White to A.G. Daniells, June 17, 1896**

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“You may be familiar with the circumstance which attended the coming back to Australia of Brother and Sister Semmens, and with the fact that they have always looked forward to the time when they should be principally engaged caring for the sick.**

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“Dr Kellogg has never been able to understand why our Conferences should not employ them to work in the interests of the sick and suffering, and to instruct our people in the principles of healthful living, the same as many workers trained at the Sanitarium are employed by the American Conferences. He has been very much dissatisfied that Brother Semmens was so largely employed in evangelistic work....”**

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“We have been anxious to make a beginning in some line of work that would be largely self-supporting, and that would provide an opportunity for the sick among us to have rational treatment, and that would also open the way for the training of Christian Help workers....”**

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“From our experience with the health work, and health institutions in America, and from the testimonies sent to the managers and physicians at the Sanitariums, during the last twenty-five years, our brethren came to the unanimous opinion, that it was right, and essential to the highest success of the health work, that our health institutions should be sustained, and directed by the body, acting through properly appointed committees. And that all physicians and nurses should be as fully under the supervision of the general body, as are the ministers and Bible workers....**



## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“It is the recognition of these principles, that has led to the rapid growth of our health institutions, and our Medical Mission work in its various branches [in Australia and New Zealand], during the last seven years.”**

**—Letter, W.C. White, August 11, 1896**

## **A United Work**

**“I want to tell you that when the gospel ministers and the medical missionary workers are not united, there is placed on our churches the worst evil that can be placed there. Our medical missionaries ought to be interested in the work of our Conferences, and our Conference workers ought to be as much interested in the work of our medical missionaries.”**

*—Loma Linda Messages, 59*

# **A Great Destiny**

**“In considering the work to be done here in Australia, we see before us a great destiny. While talking with Sister White recently about this matter she made the following remark, ‘The medical work in Australia is destined to do more in this field than it has done even in America.’ Is it possible that we shall have such gigantic institutions and piles of buildings as they have? No; we have been told that this is not the best way to carry it forward.**

# **A Great Destiny**

**“The remark was also made in that conversation that the medical work here in Australia is to be an example of what the work should be. In what respect? I ask. Evidently in the... harmonious relations existing between the medical work and the other branches of the third angel’s message.**

**“In Newcastle we have tried the experiment of uniting our evangelistic and medical missionary work, and now, Brother Starr, what has been the result, has it been successful or otherwise?**

# **A Great Destiny**

**“Elder Starr: ‘Splendid. The people themselves are unwilling that there should be a separation....’**

**“[I have never] seen a community in which our peculiar views had been fully presented where there was less prejudice existing. This is as God would have it. Our work is not to create prejudice but to disarm it. We want nurses who are Bible workers; and we want Bible workers and canvassers who are nurses.”**

**—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, July 2, 1899**

# A Great Destiny

**“Our first work began in the Australasian Bible School, located at St. Kilda, Victoria. Here we had many varied experiences.... Later we labored in tent and Bible work in Sydney, under the direction of J.O. Corliss, doing much work among the sick. We did not then understand why we could not enter upon strictly medical work; we know now. God was training us, that we should not be one-sided workers, but have an all-around experience.”**

**—General Conference Bulletin, June 2, 1909, 284**

## **Paying the Bills**

**“Our medical work [in Australasia] stands in the same relation to the evangelical work and organizations that all the rest of the work does. We have no separate medical organization.... That is a part of our evangelical work; and the leading physician, or physicians, are members of our Union Conference Committee, and they hold licenses to preach the gospel, and we encourage them to be ministers of Jesus Christ as well as physicians. We foster the medical work the same as we do anything else.**

## **Paying the Bills**

**“Yes, when they need it. When we first started out, the first man that came to us was Brother A.W. Semmens, a nurse who graduated from the Battle Creek Sanitarium. When he came out there, I did not know what to do, to get him started in the medical work. Some of our brethren had a little more light, and they said, ‘Let us make him a preacher and a medical worker combined; let us have him work in the churches, and tell the brethren of the gospel of health, and let us help support him from the tithes of the Conference.’**



## **Paying the Bills**

**“So we gave Brother Semmens some money from the tithes, and we said, ‘He shall have his living now, and we want him to teach the principles of health and temperance, and of the gospel in all its branches, doing what he can to educate the people in all these things.’ And so he went right along, like all our Conference laborers, making a report of his receipts, and then the Conference paid him what they ought to pay him to make a fair living.”**

**—*General Conference Bulletin*, April 7, 1901, 91–92**

## **Paying the Bills**

**“I send you... a letter written for America... which will show you how I regard the tithe money being used for other purposes. This is the Lord’s special revenue fund, for a special purpose. I have never so fully understood this matter as I now understand it. Having had questions directed here to me to answer, I have had special instruction from the Lord that the tithe is for a special purpose, consecrated to God to sustain those who minister in the sacred work as the Lord’s chosen, to do His work not only in sermonizing but in ministering. They should understand all that this comprehends.**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 13, 281*

# Paying the Bills

**“In the night season I am laboring earnestly with persons who do not seem to understand that in the providence of God the medical missionary work is to be as the right hand of the body. Some utterly fail to realize the importance of missionaries being also medical missionaries. A gospel minister will be twice as successful in his work if he understands how to treat disease.**

# Paying the Bills

**“Continually increasing light has been given me on this subject. Some, who do not see the advantage of educating the youth to be physicians both of the mind and of the body, say that the tithe should not be used to support medical missionaries, who devote their time to treating the sick.**

## **Paying the Bills**

**“In response to such statements as these, I am instructed to say that the mind must not become so narrowed down that it cannot take in the truth of the situation. A minister of the gospel, who is also a medical missionary, who through Christ can cure physical ailments as well as minister in spiritual things, is a much more efficient worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete.**

## **Paying the Bills**

**“For many years I have been gathering rays of divine light on this subject. Let those who are being educated for the ministry receive an education in medical missionary lines. It is of great advantage to the minister of the gospel who expects to go to foreign fields that he should have a knowledge of surgery, that in cases of necessity he will know how to handle medical instruments. This knowledge will open doors for the presentation of the truth to the higher classes, as well as to the most lowly.”**

**—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, 269**

# **The Bottom Line**

**“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....**

**“Had you carried the work forward in the lines in which God intended you to, had you done medical missionary work, trying to heal soul and body, you would have seen hundreds and thousands coming into the truth....**

# The Bottom Line

**“You will never be ministers after the gospel order till you show a decided interest in medical missionary work, the gospel of healing and blessing and strengthening. Come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty powers of darkness, that it be not said of you, ‘Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord.’”**

**—*General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901**



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We'll start with the sad fact that opposition to Dr. Kellogg and his health reform work was apparently fairly widespread among the ministers of the church. How many? Which ones? Scanty info there.

We can see this easily at least as early as 1888. Due to illness, the General Conference president, Elder George Butler was unable to attend the Conference, but he wrote a 39-page letter to Ellen White. He might better have spent the time praying.

To her daughter-in-law, Mary, she described his letter as "a most curious production of accusations and charges against me." This letter has been scrutinized closely by those interested in the subjects of 1888 and righteousness by faith. It may come as a surprise that this letter mentions the name of A.T. Jones only once, and Dr. Waggoner three times, but Dr. Kellogg's name appears fifteen times.

In her response to Butler, Ellen White wrote

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*—Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 99–106*

What was the source of all this? Probably many things. Kellogg had more formal education than anyone else in the denomination at the time, and some felt he was too free in showing it off.

Another issue was the inherent difficulty in selling people on the idea of self-control. Health reform wasn't always a popular concept.

This latter issue was a particular irritant to Kellogg. He knew that the instruction on health reform was from God, so what did it mean when the ministers opposed or ignored it? That put the doctor in a hard spot. It's not easy to love “the brethren” when they are opposing your efforts to do right.

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Click to add notes

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*—Battle Creek Letters, 11-13*

This was written in 1898, and you'll notice the comment about Kellogg's censuring the ministers.

That had started about the year 1896. Kellogg seems to have just kind of given up on the ministry and decided he would go ahead and outwork the whole batch of them.

But with that came pride, and a resistance to even Ellen White's encouragement to work together with his brethren—still not an easy task.

Another sore point with some of the ministry was Dr. Kellogg's emphasis on helping the poor. The branch of work seems to have held little interest to them.



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—*Home Missionary*, November 1, 1897

This on-going guerrilla warfare made it hard for Ellen White. Both sides in the battle would cherry-pick anything they could find from her writings that would support their position. So she often ended up writing differently to different people.

To each participant in the fighting, she would generally write warnings and reproofs, and speak as favorably as possible of the other parties.

Eventually, though, neither side was listening to her very much.

One final example of this comes from 1903—a full year after Dr. Kellogg had written *The Living Temple*:

## **Sowing the Seeds**

**“God does not endorse the efforts put forth by different ones to make the work of Dr. Kellogg as hard as possible, in order to build themselves up. God gave the light on health reform, and those who rejected it rejected God. One and another who knew better said that it all came from Dr. Kellogg, and they made war upon him. This had a bad influence on the doctor. He put on the coat of irritation and retaliation. God did not want him to stand in the position of warfare, and He does not want you to stand there.**

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**“[Some] have turned away from the Battle Creek Sanitarium.... because of something that the doctor had said or done that did not please them. This God did not approve.**

*—General Conference Bulletin, April 6, 1903*

But it wouldn't be right to leave the impression that Dr. Kellogg was an angelic victim of all these attacks. A victim, yes, but not always angelic, and not always correct in his own plans and desires.

More than anything else, Kellogg's problem was pride and the desire to simply out-do all the ministers. His programs, even after the fires of 1902, just had to be bigger, better, and attract more attention. And because he was a very effective fundraiser, that often strained the church's world-wide budget.

## Reaping the Harvest

**“I see that your difficulties are becoming more settled and pronounced because Dr. Kellogg refuses counsel and chooses to do the very things that God has told him not to do. But the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. If Dr. Kellogg refuses to change his methods of labor, then the sure result will come.**

This next letter was written New Year's day, 1900, to Elder Olsen, the General Conference president:

**CLICK** for text.

## Reaping the Harvest

**“Seek to save Dr. Kellogg from himself. He is not heeding the counsel he should heed. He is not satisfied because the Lord has signified that the missionary work does not consist alone in the slum work in Chicago. That work, thought to be the great and important thing to be done, is a very defective and expensive work. It has absorbed the means, and has deprived our poverty-stricken foreign mission fields of the help God designed them to have.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 4, 427*

In the end, all of Ellen White’s diplomacy, counsel, prayers, and entreaties proved unable to stop the growing rift between Dr. Kellogg and the ministry. The pantheism issue was serious, and publicly the final straw, but never the whole or even the main problem in the minds of those directly involved.

In 1907, Dr. Kellogg was dropped from the membership of the Battle Creek Dime Tabernacle. He hadn’t attended services for several years, and didn’t bother to attend the business meeting that dealt with his membership.

The one whom Ellen White had called “God’s physician” was lost to the cause. What was to become of the church’s medical work?

## Meanwhile, Down Under

“It is [God’s] purpose that there shall be a true pattern in Australia—a sample of how other fields shall be worked. The work should be symmetrical, and a living witness for the truth.”

—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 2, 1899

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Truth be told, the future of Adventist medical work was already visible—if you happened to be in Australia. The one big problem that kept it from being more prominent was the lack of funding, partially at least because of Dr. Kellogg’s extravagance.

But still, the work done “down under” accomplished at least some of what it set out to do:

**CLICK** and read:

The key idea here is “symmetry,” but it’s not real clear what that’s all about. Willie White helps fill out the thought:

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**“It has been presented to Mother that Australasia is a field in which we will do a model work, a work that will show to our friends and brethren in other lands how the evangelistic work and the medical work should be carried forward in perfect agreement, in perfect harmony, blended together.”**

—Letter, W.C. White to Dr. F.T. Lamb, August 23, 1899

Notice what the model was supposed to show—  
medical and evangelistic work blended harmoniously.

*Sounds* like a good idea. What could be hard about that?

Well, getting the doctors and ministers to work together, that’s what’s hard.

But... it *can* be done, and Ellen White was determined to make it happen. The Lord had actually prepared the way for this kind of work in early 1893—when the banks of Australia crashed, life savings were lost, and poverty spread over the country.

At first, that didn’t seem like a good thing....

## Meanwhile, Down Under

**“The failure of banks and the financial pressure make hard times everywhere in this country. It is difficult for students to obtain money to defray their expenses at school, or for our brethren to build even the most humble places of worship. We hear of people starving to death in the cities, and nearly every day persons come to our door begging for something to eat. They are never turned away....”**

*—Review and Herald , May 29, 1894*

But hard times always have a silver lining, and that seems to have dawned on Ellen White with particular forcefulness on the fifth of August, 1894—



## The Path of Influence

**“Yesterday it all opened before me that in this very line of hospitality, I have been repeatedly shown that we can unite the people with us, and can have twofold influence over them. This was unfolded before me in the first experience in this work, many years back, and we have ever linked our interest with humanity.”**

—Letter, Ellen White to W.C. White, August 6, 1894

What was the “silver lining”? The needs of the people provided an opportunity to help them. And helping them in practical ways provided an opportunity to bless them spiritually as well.

The one problem, of course, was that the Adventists were not any better off financially than everyone else. That meant that their opportunity to serve hinged on three things: 1) their own willingness to sacrifice in order to be generous; 2) funding from fellow Adventists in other countries; and 3) miraculous support direct from God. All three were needed, but the funding from fellow Adventists abroad came up short time after time.

Nonetheless, the work went forward.

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**“We cannot with our wills sway back the wave of poverty which is sweeping over this country; but just as far as the Lord shall provide us with means, we shall break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 16, 69*

This was in 1894, at a time when Dr. Kellogg’s Christian Help Bands were making news back in the United States.

That was the one element of Kellogg’s programs that Ellen White never seems to have criticized or even cautioned against. Instead, she consistently supported—and practiced—that kind of simple “medical missionary work.”

She did voice frequent concerns with the more institutionalized “city mission” work, especially with Kellogg’s large-scale, high-volume, big-money approach. The problem was that as it grew in size and expense, it tended to decline in spiritual influence.

## The Path of Influence

**“On Sabbath afternoon, May 12 [1894], a special meeting of the North Fitzroy church was held to consider the Christian Help work. Bro. Daniells conducted the meeting, and cited his hearers to the example of Christ, who “went about doing good,” ministering to the suffering body as well as to the sin-sick soul. Bro. Semmens, who has had considerable experience in this work in America, told how the work is done there. Sister Ingels gave some examples of practical Christian work in Prahran.**

And so the direction that medical missionary work in Australia would take was fairly predictable:

**CLICK** for text.

## **The Path of Influence**

**“The objects of the Christian Help Bands are, 1. To minister to the sick; 2. To provide for the needy; 3. To comfort the distressed; 4. To uplift the fallen; 5. To lead to Christ the unconverted. This work has been entered upon heartily in North Fitzroy. Between fifty and sixty persons have enrolled their names as volunteers. Five bands of ten persons each (including the leader) have been organized, and have commenced work. Already a large number of needy cases have been found, and there are calls for food, clothing, and bedding. Some of these wants have been met, and others will be promptly.**

## The Path of Influence

**“A committee was appointed to solicit contributions, and encouraging offers of help have been received, including a donation of two guineas from a member of the Fitzroy city council.**

**We look for good results.”**

*—Bible Echo, May 28, 1894*

A couple slides back a “Brother Semmons” was mentioned. This was Arthur Semmons, but like almost everyone back then, he was generally known by his initials, so we will call him A.W. Semmons.

A.W. was a young man from Australia who had made the long trip to Battle Creek some years before to take nurse’s training at the Sanitarium. It was a case of being in the right place at just the right time. A.W. had been at the meeting where Dr. Kellogg started up the Christian Help bands. In fact, A.W. had the distinction of being the official leader of Christian Help Band #1. He had also gained experience working for several months at the Chicago City Mission. Now he was the point man for medical missionary work back home in Australia. And people were looking for “good results.”

## **The Path of Influence**

**“Some five months ago the Christian Help work was started under the leadership of brother Semmens. Seven bands were organized. The locality around the Echo office for some distance was divided into districts, with one band to each. Each district had two lady visitors, whose duty it was to make investigation and determine what help should be given to the destitute cases reported. Through this means many of the poor and needy have had their wants relieved and the gospel preached unto them.**

In

## The Path of Influence

**“During the past six months there has been a greater interest manifested in this church in the missionary meetings than for years past, and the attendance has been increased fourfold.”**

—Anna L. Ingels, *Review and Herald*, December 4, 1894

A.W. Semmons was on the hot seat, but he played his part well, and everyone was pleased with the progress made.

**CLICK** for text.

One very interested observer of all this was Elder W.C. White. Here are a couple assessments from his perspective:

## **The Path of Influence**

**“I am more and more satisfied that the plans on which Elder Corliss is endeavoring to work, are in harmony with Apostolic methods. We have been very much encouraged by the growth in wisdom and in efficiency of the young men who are working with him, and we are much pleased with the results of their labors. There is now such a demand for Bible readings upon the part of the people to whom we have been distributing the printed sermons that we shall arrange to release Brethren Semmens and Pallant from the work of distribution, that they may spend their entire energies in holding readings.**

**—Letter, W.C. White to O.A. Olsen, August 20, 1895**



## The Path of Influence

**“For some months they [A.W. Semmens and his wife, Emma] have been laboring in Sydney and its suburbs. He combines the work of a colporteur-evangelist and a missionary-nurse, and his labors are very effective. He is becoming one of the best Bible workers we have, and I think he is being much benefited by the course of instruction [in how to give ‘Bible Readings’] he is receiving from Elder Corliss.”**

—Letter, W.C. White to Elder Robert Hare, November 20, 1896

This is starting to sound like some sort of fairy tale. Things are working well, everybody’s happy, the good guys are winning.

Why does that all sound suspiciously unlikely? Maybe things are like that in your world, but back where I come from... well, not so much.

And, as it turns out, the good brethren in Australia had not yet reached paradise, either.

We get an inside look at all this from another letter by Willie White:

## **A United Work**

**“We have been taught by the example of Christ, and by the Testimonies that have been repeatedly given to our brethren in the ministry, and to the physicians and managers of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the Health Retreat, that the work of the gospel minister and of the physician should be combined; that the minister should have a care for the physical prosperity of his flock, that the physician should be a true minister of Christ, laboring for the health of the soul as well as for the body.**

## **A United Work**

**“With this instruction in view I have felt that our brethren made a grave mistake when they put a check upon our ministers from teaching health reform, and called for specialists to do that work. It would have been better if the specialists had been employed to teach the ministers, so that their work with the people would have been more effective.**

## **A United Work**

**“I have felt that it was just as grave an error for Dr. Kellogg to make everything of the health work, and belittle the evangelistic work, as he virtually does by magnifying the one so far above the other.**

## A United Work

**“I have felt that his criticisms were largely out of place regarding the work of Brother Semmens during the past two years, because in treating the matter as though Semmens was not fulfilling his mission while dividing his time between evangelical and nursing work, he virtually says that persons trained in the health work must make that their exclusive business; and thus he does just what the [General] Conference did in putting asunder that which God has joined together.”**

—Letter, W.C. White to A.G. Daniells, June 17, 1896

OK... so what is Willie talking about here? This may be a reference to the formation of the largely independent Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association. This was done at the General Conference of 1893, and the records of those proceedings were left out of the *Daily Bulletin* along with Kellogg's talks. That information was to be published in a second Extra edition of the *Medical Missionary*. I've never seen a copy of that, and I don't even know whether or not it was ever printed.

But there's even more going on behind the scenes. For one thing, A.W.—and maybe Emma as well—wasn't entirely happy with his job. Once again the story comes from a letter by Willie White, this time to the Executive Committee of the Australasian Union Conference:

## Not Everyone Was Happy...

**“You may be familiar with the circumstance which attended the coming back to Australia of Brother and Sister Semmens, and with the fact that they have always looked forward to the time when they should be principally engaged caring for the sick.**

In other words, they weren't all that thrilled with giving Bible studies. After all, they were trained nurses, and back in Battle Creek and Chicago, nurses *didn't* spend their time giving Bible studies.

Why waste years of scientific training on a job that some minister could be taught to do in four or five months?

Willie goes on:

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“Dr Kellogg has never been able to understand why our Conferences should not employ them to work in the interests of the sick and suffering, and to instruct our people in the principles of healthful living, the same as many workers trained at the Sanitarium are employed by the American Conferences. He has been very much dissatisfied that Brother Semmens was so largely employed in evangelistic work....**

OK, so that's not too surprising. A.W. and Emma were the product of their education. Their ideas of what nursing was all about had come from Dr. Kellogg. So what should we expect them to think?

Incidentally, be careful what you're taught. You really owe it to yourself to evaluate the stuff that people feed you. Including me, of course, but especially the education that forms your basic presuppositions about life.

Anyway, Elder White's letter continues:

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“We have been anxious to make a beginning in some line of work that would be largely self-supporting, and that would provide an opportunity for the sick among us to have rational treatment, and that would also open the way for the training of Christian Help workers....**

Here we start to see the difference between medical missionary work in America and medical missionary work in Australasia. It's not that either group was doing something that the others would consider totally heretical, but the overall balance was far different.



## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“From our experience with the health work, and health institutions in America, and from the testimonies sent to the managers and physicians at the Sanitariums, during the last twenty-five years, our brethren came to the unanimous opinion, that it was right, and essential to the highest success of the health work, that our health institutions should be sustained, and directed by the body, acting through properly appointed committees. And that all physicians and nurses should be as fully under the supervision of the general body, as are the ministers and Bible workers....**

In

## **Not Everyone Was Happy...**

**“It is the recognition of these principles, that has led to the rapid growth of our health institutions, and our Medical Mission work in its various branches [in Australia and New Zealand], during the last seven years.”**

—Letter, W.C. White, August 11, 1896

This may seem like a “small potatoes” type of issue. Just a little different emphasis from one guy to the next.

Actually, this is really big. As we saw in our last meeting, it’s the difference between a united medical-evangelistic work, and what Ellen White calls the worst evil:

## A United Work

**“I want to tell you that when the gospel ministers and the medical missionary workers are not united, there is placed on our churches the worst evil that can be placed there. Our medical missionaries ought to be interested in the work of our Conferences, and our Conference workers ought to be as much interested in the work of our medical missionaries.”**

*—Loma Linda Messages, 59*

How could this be such a big issue? Really, the “*worst*” evil seems like a bit of an overstatement. Worse than Kellogg’s pantheism? Worse than giving up the Sabbath?

Grammarians may have to help hold the line on this, but “*worst*” is unarguably a superlative. There really is nothing worse than the worst. And Ellen White hardly ever uses hyperbole. (That’s just a fancy word that English teachers use for exaggeration.)

So what makes it so bad? And does it really affect just the churches, and do nothing bad to doctors?

No answers for those questions right now. Let’s just look a bit more at the “model” Ellen White was trying to create in Australia.

## **A Great Destiny**

**“In considering the work to be done here in Australia, we see before us a great destiny. While talking with Sister White recently about this matter she made the following remark, ‘The medical work in Australia is destined to do more in this field than it has done even in America.’ Is it possible that we shall have such gigantic institutions and piles of buildings as they have? No; we have been told that this is not the best way to carry it forward.**

Perhaps the most encouraging thing about the effort to blend medical and evangelistic work together is that it worked. This next comment is from a speech by an MD from New Zealand, Dr. Edward Caro:

**CLICK** for text:

## **A Great Destiny**

**“The remark was also made in that conversation that the medical work here in Australia is to be an example of what the work should be. In what respect? I ask. Evidently in the... harmonious relations existing between the medical work and the other branches of the third angel’s message.**

**“In Newcastle we have tried the experiment of uniting our evangelistic and medical missionary work, and now, Brother Starr, what has been the result, has it been successful or otherwise?**

## A Great Destiny

**“Elder Starr: ‘Splendid. The people themselves are unwilling that there should be a separation....’**

**“[I have never] seen a community in which our peculiar views had been fully presented where there was less prejudice existing. This is as God would have it. Our work is not to create prejudice but to disarm it. We want nurses who are Bible workers; and we want Bible workers and canvassers who are nurses.”**

*—Australasian Union Conference Record, July 2, 1899*

And success comes in many forms. One of the better effects of all this was that A.W. and Emma Semmens ended up happy with the way things had turned out. It took a while, but the concept of a mingled ministry that Ellen White was promoting finally made sense to them. Here's how he described it some years later:

## A Great Destiny

**“Our first work began in the Australasian Bible School, located at St. Kilda, Victoria. Here we had many varied experiences.... Later we labored in tent and Bible work in Sydney, under the direction of J.O. Corliss, doing much work among the sick. We did not then understand why we could not enter upon strictly medical work; we know now. God was training us, that we should not be one-sided workers, but have an all-around experience.”**

*—General Conference Bulletin, June 2, 1909, 284*

So... what does all this mean? What are we to make of it? This idea that the Lord was trying to establish a new model for our work... how big of a deal was that? In *my* opinion, pretty big. Big enough to make the difference between success and limping along afflicted by the “worst evil.”

Here’s another measure of this issue’s magnitude: It may sound crass, but one of the surest ways to measure commitment—and this works for both individuals and corporate entities—is, to “follow the money.”

So how serious were the brethren about all this? How serious was Ellen White? Let’s look at finances for a moment.

## Paying the Bills

**“Our medical work [in Australasia] stands in the same relation to the evangelical work and organizations that all the rest of the work does. We have no separate medical organization.... That is a part of our evangelical work; and the leading physician, or physicians, are members of our Union Conference Committee, and they hold licenses to preach the gospel, and we encourage them to be ministers of Jesus Christ as well as physicians. We foster the medical work the same as we do anything else.**

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A.G. Daniells was the president of the Australasian Union Conference at the time, so he’s the one who received the most direct input from Ellen White on making all this “united ministry” stuff happen.

But that didn’t always mean she spelled out every little detail. He still had some figuring out to do at times. Here’s his account—given at the 1901 General Conference—of figuring out the money issue:

**CLICK** and read text:

That may sound simple, but it raises questions, one of which was immediately addressed by someone in the audience: “Do any of the medical workers receive any support from the tithes?” Daniells responded:



## **Paying the Bills**

**“Yes, when they need it. When we first started out, the first man that came to us was Brother A.W. Semmens, a nurse who graduated from the Battle Creek Sanitarium. When he came out there, I did not know what to do, to get him started in the medical work. Some of our brethren had a little more light, and they said, ‘Let us make him a preacher and a medical worker combined; let us have him work in the churches, and tell the brethren of the gospel of health, and let us help support him from the tithes of the Conference.’**

In

## Paying the Bills

**“So we gave Brother Semmens some money from the tithes, and we said, ‘He shall have his living now, and we want him to teach the principles of health and temperance, and of the gospel in all its branches, doing what he can to educate the people in all these things.’ And so he went right along, like all our Conference laborers, making a report of his receipts, and then the Conference paid him what they ought to pay him to make a fair living.”**

*—General Conference Bulletin, April 7, 1901, 91–92*

Hmm... Tithe money... for a nurse. Is that kosher?

What made Daniells think he could use tithe funds like that? We don't know all the input that Ellen White might have given him, but here's one example from a letter she wrote to Elder Daniells:

## **Paying the Bills**

**“I send you... a letter written for America... which will show you how I regard the tithe money being used for other purposes. This is the Lord’s special revenue fund, for a special purpose. I have never so fully understood this matter as I now understand it. Having had questions directed here to me to answer, I have had special instruction from the Lord that the tithe is for a special purpose, consecrated to God to sustain those who minister in the sacred work as the Lord’s chosen, to do His work not only in sermonizing but in ministering. They should understand all that this comprehends.**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 13, 281*

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What does she mean by those closing comments?

“not only in sermonizing but in ministering”

“understand all that this comprehends”

Well, it’s safe to say that for most of us, “understanding” can take a while. Evidently she was still working on spreading that “understanding” in 1901 when Elder Daniells made told his story about A.W. Semmons at the General Conference. Four days after Daniells spoke, she had this to say:

## **Paying the Bills**

**“In the night season I am laboring earnestly with persons who do not seem to understand that in the providence of God the medical missionary work is to be as the right hand of the body. Some utterly fail to realize the importance of missionaries being also medical missionaries. A gospel minister will be twice as successful in his work if he understands how to treat disease.**

In

## **Paying the Bills**

**“Continually increasing light has been given me on this subject. Some, who do not see the advantage of educating the youth to be physicians both of the mind and of the body, say that the tithe should not be used to support medical missionaries, who devote their time to treating the sick.**

In

## **Paying the Bills**

**“In response to such statements as these, I am instructed to say that the mind must not become so narrowed down that it cannot take in the truth of the situation. A minister of the gospel, who is also a medical missionary, who through Christ can cure physical ailments as well as minister in spiritual things, is a much more efficient worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete.**

In

## **Paying the Bills**

**“For many years I have been gathering rays of divine light on this subject. Let those who are being educated for the ministry receive an education in medical missionary lines. It is of great advantage to the minister of the gospel who expects to go to foreign fields that he should have a knowledge of surgery, that in cases of necessity he will know how to handle medical instruments. This knowledge will open doors for the presentation of the truth to the higher classes, as well as to the most lowly.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 269*

Maybe what she said didn't have the desired effect. Maybe she just knew that it takes a while to get a new idea into people's heads. Whatever the reason, it was the next day that she made this famous comment:

## **The Bottom Line**

**“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....**

**“Had you carried the work forward in the lines in which God intended you to, had you done medical missionary work, trying to heal soul and body, you would have seen hundreds and thousands coming into the truth....**

Not clear enough? Well, she wasn't done...



## The Bottom Line

**“You will never be ministers after the gospel order till you show a decided interest in medical missionary work, the gospel of healing and blessing and strengthening. Come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty powers of darkness, that it be not said of you, ‘Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord.’”**

*—General Conference Bulletin, April 12, 1901*

And so that’s where we’ll stop for now. Wondering about the fate of the “hundreds and thousands” who would have come into the faith. And pondering what it will take for us—laymen, too!—to become ministers after the gospel order.