

A CHANNEL THAT IS ALWAYS FLOWING

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AUDIO

sc. **01** On March 23, 2021, the 400-meter freighter Ever Given got stuck in the banks of the Suez Canal, blocking the passage of all ships trying to cross the canal.

The Ever Given incident had major consequences, as ten percent of international maritime trade passes through this route. Just about 420 ships, loaded with 26 million tons of goods, remained blocked during the days the vessel was grounded. Losses exceeded \$38.4 billion, approximately \$400 million an hour.

A similar problem may happen when our giving channel is clogged by unfaithfulness or distrust. In other cases, even well-intentioned people who love God's work may obstruct their giving channel by frequently giving their whole offerings to specific projects of their interest. In this way, they inadvertently cripple other branches of the work that are equally important or even more important in Jesus' missionary master plan.

On December 25, 1865, Ellen G. White was given a vision in which she saw that "the health reform was a great enterprise, closely connected with the present truth" (1T, 553.1). She also saw that Adventists should have an institution where the sick "could be treated for their diseases and also learn how to take care of themselves so as to prevent sickness" (1T, 553.1).

After a massive campaign was launched, both poor and rich church members contributed significant amounts to support the advancement of the Health Institute in Battle Creek. However, surprisingly, Ellen G. White cautioned them that despite their good intentions, this action was misguided. She warned that they were, so to say, obstructing their giving channels. But how?

Then she explained that care should be taken not to "cripple other branches of the great work which are of equal or greater importance at this time" (1T 559.2). When people restrict the influence of their offerings by giving all to specific destinations of their preference, they disable themselves from doing as much in other directions as they should otherwise do, said Ellen G. White (1T 559.2).

Therefore, she said that "with every stirring appeal to our people for means... there should have been a caution not to rob other branches of the work" (1T 559.2). The underlying principle of this statement is that all branches of God's work, everywhere, should receive our equitable support to ensure that they will grow simultaneously. This can be likened to nourishing a body; when it receives proper nourishment, all its parts thrive at the same time.

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Following this principle, which is aligned with Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8, the Adventist Church voted in 2002 for the Combined Offering Plan. This plan proposes that all unassigned offerings should be equitably distributed locally, regionally, and internationally, supporting all segments of God's work.

When distributing our offerings, let us keep our giving channel unblocked, providing regular and equitable support simultaneously to all Missionary endeavors in all places. Let us put our desires last and God first!