

# Old Apple Tree

#0018

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 19, 1979

Some of you have just joined the team in recent days, and some of you have been here for many, many years. But I read in the Bible a story Jesus told that the folks that came in at the end of the day got the same wages as the ones who worked all day. Do you remember that? So whether you are early comers or latecomers, to be on this team is a great privilege. A great privilege.

I was thinking about the cells that make up a tree. There is an old apple tree on the road leading to Haskell Hall. It overhangs the road that goes up toward the shop.

Brother Cooper, who used to be our manager some 30 years ago, and I planted that tree. It's an interesting tree. It has several kinds of apples on it. That's by design, of course. We thought that would be an interesting curiosity here on the campus. But any cell that is formed in that tree may be a part of the permanent tree structure, or it may be a part of an *apple* that does not stay with the tree always.

Which is more important? Well, I'd say both are important, wouldn't you? If an apple tree doesn't bear apples, it really has little excuse for existence. That's what people plant apple trees for—to produce apples. But if *every* cell made and grown in that tree *insisted* on being a part of an apple and leaving the tree, that wouldn't be very efficient either, would it? What would happen? There wouldn't be any apples either.

So, I have a burden this evening for two things: A burden to talk to you about the mission field of *Wildwood*. Now, if I were here talking about the mission field of the Far East or the Far West or the Far South or the Far North, I'm sure I would have listening ears and willing hearts. I want to talk to you about the mission field of *this* place. This place. If we were to send a person to some new field to enter it, we'll just take the field of, well, Argentina for instance. Suppose we wanted to establish an outpost in Argentina, and we want to get a company together to establish a work there, I'm sure that we would be praying to the Lord to lay the burden upon some hearts: a burden to go there and to stick with the problems of pioneer work and to build up a work and carry it through.

You know, at the turn of the century when this denomination was experiencing a great development of foreign mission service, many of our missionaries who went out to China or India or South America, went out there *expecting* to spend the rest of their lives in the mission field. This was a combination of two things. They expected Jesus to come soon, and they had dedicated themselves to a land and to a people they believed God had called them to work among. And they became, in a sense, residents or citizens of that country. In a sense, you understand.

Today when jet planes fly back and forth over the planet, it's easy to lose all such sense of mission. I want to share with you this evening, the vision of the privilege of having a *commitment* to a special work that God has called you to. In the book *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 484, we are told:

"The wonderful sacrifice of Christ has made it possible for every man to do a special work. When the worker receives wisdom from the only true source, he will become a pure channel of light and blessing; for he will receive his capability for service in rich currents of grace and light from the throne of God" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 484.

When you think of Africa, you think of the pioneer missionary, W. H. Anderson. When you think of China, you think of men like Dr. Harry Miller. When you think of South America, you think of the Westfalls. The successful work that has been done in self-supporting work so far has largely been done by men and women who have felt called to a special work and have stuck with it.

Now, I know that there has to be an interchange of workers, and a moving on of workers from time to time. But there has been so much of that in the last few years that I'm not laboring over that point tonight. I'm talking to you about the burden of my heart to get some cells in the old apple tree that esteem it a privilege to be a part of the mother tree, and who will help to make this tree produce good apples, and the apples can go on.

So, if you're going on, I hope you'll be a good apple. But my plea is for some people who will help us make this apple tree continue to be strong and virile. As the Psalmist says:

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" Psalm 92:14.

And I repeat, that to do this requires a commitment that is at least as definite and at least as strong as the commitment to go to Africa or India. Nothing that I say should be taken as either an open or indirect criticism of those who go to other places. Nothing could be farther from my mind. I rejoice (and those of you who know me best know that I am saying this from my heart), I rejoice in the growing work, the expanding work, the developing work, and I am glad I've had a part in it and continue to have a part in it.

But brothers and sisters, we need an apple tree at Wildwood that continues to produce apples. And the only way that can be done is to make this strong, strong for God. And this cannot be done if we are always turning and overturning workers. This cannot be done. Impossible!

It's *amazing* to me the number of transfusions (changing the figure) that this mother has given in starting and encouraging and blessing and sustaining and supporting other places. I rejoice in it. I praise God for it. But those of you who are acquainted with giving blood transfusions know that just as soon as a person has

given a blood transfusion, you start feeding him so he can do what? Make some more blood. Sure. And you don't expect him to give a blood transfusion *every* week, do you? If you do, you'll soon run out of *that* donor, at any rate. [Laughter]

I think it's a *miracle* of God, brethren and sisters, that this institution has been able to survive up to this point. Now, I want to read you some things on this, for these ideas didn't come out of my head. They came out of a book.

Many of you've heard of Magan and Sutherland. They were at Battle Creek in 1901. They were getting ready to go to Berrien Springs. They were carrying on a program of reformatory education. Magan and Sutherland, with their staff, had been pioneering and pressing ahead in a reformatory educational program. And do you know what some well-meaning people suggested? (Maybe some weren't so well-meaning, but at least I'll say the well-meaning ones.) They suggested, "Wouldn't it be a fine thing to take that group of workers, that were doing such wonderful things there in reformatory education in Battle Creek, and put one here and one there, and one over here and so forth." Well, there's a time, I'm sure, for spreading things.

[Tape skips]

I could read you some references. And if I thought we were in danger of getting too much blood, I would read you some references about that. But I'm going to read some things that the prophet of God said at the General Conference in 1901:

"The question has arisen in regard to Brother Magan's connecting with Brother Daniels in his work..."

Brother Daniels was the new president of the General Conference, and so someone suggested that Brother Magan would be a good one to work with him.

"...I ask Brother Magan if he felt called of God to take this position. He said, No. He said that he was satisfied that God wanted him to remain in the school where he had been working. I told him that this was in accordance with the light and evidence given me on the subject"  
*Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901.

I have read this, among other things, to introduce a very important principle. Notice that Brother Magan *himself* felt that God had called him to that work, did you notice that? When the suggestion was made to him that he connect with the General Conference president, he said that wasn't the burden that the Lord had laid on him.

My dear brothers and sisters, if your attachment to this work at the mother tree is so light and little that you are ready to go at the drop of a hat, that you are ready to be transferred at any time, it's like someone that Sister White says cannot resist the first temptation in the form of an invitation to marriage. People who are so anxious to get married—the first invitation, that's it, right now; you might lose the chance.

If your attitude toward calls (that word “call” is an interesting word; I hear people talk, “Oh I got a call, I got a call, I got a call.”) Well, I can get you several if that’s what you desire. They’re a dime a dozen in some areas. There are so many needs and so many opportunities and especially people who are willing to work for nothing or next to it, that the opportunities are legion, brethren and sisters.

So do not feel inflated or exalted or proud when you get a “call,” an invitation or a suggestion. But Brother Magan had been invited to something that was really an important work, but he had a *more* important work for *him* to do. That was the work God had called him to do, and the prophet of God agreed to it.

“I would say to Brother Magan and Brother Sutherland, there should be in the school the same faculty that has been there in the past. The members of this faculty have been getting hold of right methods, and they are coming to see eye to eye” *Ibid.*

Oh, I wish I had an hour just on that piece of a sentence. “They are coming to see eye to eye.” The wording is so significant; it tells a lot. “They are *coming* to see eye to eye.” They were farther ahead than they were four years or a year before. They were making progress.

“In a large degree they have learned how to work with unity of effort, and the school needs their talent and ability” *Ibid.*

Now, lest I be misunderstood, I’m going to run the risk of being monotonous and repeat and repeat. I do not have the idea that every person who comes on this campus should stay here until the Lord comes. I know that we’re going to be producing apples, and the apples are going to be eaten by others. And praise the Lord; this is fine. But oh, that God may help us to keep the old apple tree active and fresh and fruitful. What do you say?

[Audience] Amen.

“The members of this faculty have been getting hold of right methods, and they are coming to see eye to eye.

“In a large degree they have learned how to work with unity of effort, and the school needs their talent and ability.

“It would be a mistake for those who have been carrying forward this effort to separate this effort to separate and scatter to one place and another, to engage in other work” *Ibid.*

Well, it goes on, and if you think that the context would be interesting, I assure you it will be more and more of the same. Get it and read it, for it’s well for us to study it.

"Let not the ones who have been united and adopted to labor together in the school be separated" *Ibid.*

I'm not reading this with the idea that this necessarily applies in all situations, or that it infallibly applies right now. I'm giving you my judgment that *this* day is *this* Scripture fulfilled in your ears. I'm giving you my judgment that this is present truth. And so while we continue to produce apples, let's be sure that we *keep* building the strong, mother tree.

Much of the instruction that Jesus gave, He gave to the multitudes. But there were times when He wanted to get His little inner circle together. This is what this meeting tonight is supposed to be tonight. And it's in that spirit that I bring you these words of Jesus addressed to His little inner circle of people that He had *chosen* to carry on His work:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" John 13:34–35.

As I said at the beginning of the meeting, whether you joined the team last week or joined it years ago, you have a great privilege. If it is the result of a vision given you of God, "blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Matthew 13:16).

I've been much impressed recently, and I suppose you have, with how the world is just filling up with the spirit of unrest, strife, dissension and trouble of every kind. I've also been impressed with the fact that that spirit tends to seep into the church. It has become, I'm sorry to say, the accepted thing today (I won't say acceptable, but accepted) that there shall be: you may call it a discussion, you may call it dialogue, you may call it debate, or all manner of things in the church. And that this is all a part of the accepted process.

Brethren, I can't control that for the church. I can't even control it on this campus. But I can plead with you, and I think you will believe me when I say I think I have a *right* to make an appeal; I think I have a *responsibility* to make an appeal. I believe that God has called us here in this institution, on this campus, to demonstrate a degree of unity and love that the world knows nothing about, and that very few even in the church think is possible in 1979. I believe that that's our privilege.

And if someone thinks that that's a dreamy idealism, then I am a dreamer and I'm an idealist. And believe me, the Latter Rain will never come until that takes place.

Most of those who have joined this team have had in their minds a willingness to be different, or else you would never have considered coming here. The people who join this team have, more or less, an appreciation of reform. And reform means to change the shape of things, but true reform is restoring the original form.

What do you think of when you think of reform? Well, somebody says health reform. That's good. Someone says educational reform. That's good. Someone says Sabbath reform. That's good. Let's think about the reform of character that results in being just as loving in our sphere as Jesus is in His sphere. Let's think about the reform that finds its fruition in a *church* where the members love one another like the Father and the Son love each other. Isn't this what Jesus prayed for?

“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” John 17:21.

You see, putting ten million or ten *billion* cells in the same general location will never produce an apple tree that can produce fruit. Those cells must be *joined* together in a union so close that united action is possible. It's quite a process to take a man or a woman from here, there, and yonder, and bring those people together on this campus and see them *blended* together under the ministry of the Holy Spirit until they move as *one* person.

“Oh,” someone says, “Brother Frazee, but that'll never be.”

Oh yes, it *will* be. And if I ever lose that vision, I want to die the day before. Not the day after, but the day *before*. Oh yes. This is what I live for.

Jesus devoted His life to training a few people in this philosophy and in this experience. And when He had them to a certain point, and knew that they were almost ready, He was so sure of it that He went off to Heaven and he left them and said, “You men stay in that upper room until you *finish* what I got you started in—learning to love one another, and work together and pray together and live together in peace and in unity and in devotion.” And then He says, “The Holy Spirit is coming upon you, and you just *fill* the whole world with the knowledge of My Gospel.”

Did it happen? Oh yes, friends. But if you had been around a few weeks before, you would have said it was impossible. Wouldn't you? Imagine being around when James and John come to the Master and say, “Master, we have something to ask You for, and we want you to tell us You'll give it to us.” Imagine. “Promise us You'll give us what we ask for.” And Jesus said, “What might it be?” (He knew already.) You know what they asked for, don't you? What was it? They asked for the highest place. But what happened to the other ten is just as interesting and significant. You know what the other ten did? What does the Bible say? They were *moved*—with sorrow? With pity? Did they have a prayer meeting? They had an *indignation* meeting! Do you know why? They wanted the same thing. And yet were James and John among that group that was there in the upper room, and entered into that experience and got ready and received the Spirit of God? Were they?

I was attending a committee in a certain place not long ago. At the close of the committee, I said to some people who were there, “Remember, this is the orchestra practicing, not ready for its rendition yet.” And really that group that Jesus had didn't look too good anywhere along the line until the Day of Pentecost. Then

3,000 souls were converted in one day! And it wasn't—and don't miss it—because of some sudden reversal of experience that came that day. It was the fruition of all the three and a half years before. Jesus had been building an apple tree. Jesus had been building an apple tree. Thank God it worked. It's working now.

Do you know the reason that God brought you to Wildwood? To give you the opportunity of becoming a part of the apple tree. And remember, any cell that eventually gets to be part of an apple has to be part of the apple tree first. Are you with me?

If you've come to Wildwood (what I'm going to say the next minute is going to help someone here tonight more than anything else I've said; open your mind for it, it might be you) expecting to get what you would get in an ordinary institution for training, and to get it the way you would get it in that ordinary way, through class work and through on-the-job training, you may miss the most important thing. The most important thing is not what you get in class or in these vespers here on Friday nights, and these assemblies and even in the work. The most important thing that you get here, friends, if you ever get it, is to become a part of the apple tree. That's it. Some people it takes a long time, and some longer than others and some *never* do it.

You know it's possible for food to pass clear through the body and never become a part of the human body. You know that, don't you? Yes. Yes. And it's possible for people to pass clear through Wildwood and spend days, weeks, months, *years* here and never be a part of it. They study in class. You know why? Their mind is always on what *they* are here to get so that they can go somewhere else and do what they want to do, and they *miss* the blessing that Jesus has for them. I repeat, *every* cell that eventually becomes a part of an apple is first a part of the apple tree.

And do you know the kind of people we need? All around the world as we're trying to develop and command these outposts, are people who are talented enough and willing enough and experienced enough and have the vision enough that they would stay here at Wildwood and make good workers all the rest of their lives. We cannot afford to weaken the outposts by having people go there that can't fit at Wildwood, and won't be trimmed and pruned so they *can* fit.

Brother and sister, *don't* think that the remedies for your human relations problem is to leave Wildwood and go somewhere else, where you'll find things more conducive or more congenial or where you can run them yourself. Any institution that's starting out by people who can't get along *here* has got two strikes against it before it goes up to bat.

Oh, I plead with you friends, learn the precious lessons that Jesus taught His disciples in those three and a half years. You know, we're told that there were more people converted on the Day of Pentecost than there were in the *whole* period of Christ's ministry. Was that because Peter was a better preacher than Jesus? Is that it? No. I'll tell you why: the big reason is that the 12 apostles weren't ready, and Jesus *knew* they weren't ready. And He spent His time and effort working to get them ready. And there are things that God *longs* to do *on* this campus and *through*

this campus, that He *will* do whenever He gets you and me to the point that He got Peter, James, John, Matthew, Thomas and the rest. Shall we let Him do it, friends?

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples,  
if ye have love one to another” John 13:35.

Now, I want this to be very practical. I don't want it to be just an inspiration. I want it to be very practical. Do you ever see anything going on here at Wildwood that you don't think ought to go on? Do you ever see any officer or department head or worker doing something that you wish they wouldn't do? Do you ever see the *institution* make decisions that you think they ought not to be made? Now, I won't ask you to raise your hand.

What do we do in those situations? There is one thing that all of us can do, and unless we do it, anything else we do will probably be the wrong thing, and that is to *pray* about it.

Someone says, “Brother Frazee, that's just soft soap. That's just tranquilizer. Here's a man who's agitated because something's going wrong, and you tell him what he needs to do is pray about it. That's just to put him off.”

No, my friend. Until Moses prays on the mountain, he's not ready to deal with the golden calf. And until you pray on the mountain, you're not ready to deal with any situation in your home, in the institution, or anywhere else.

One of the tests that God gives you is the test of seeing some people do some things that you don't think ought to be done, to see whether you'll criticize or whether you'll pray. Whether you'll criticize or pray. Which will you do?

Now, after you've prayed about it, that may be *all* that God lays on your heart to do. But after you've prayed about it, God may lay on your heart the burden to talk to the person who is responsible and who can do something about it. But brothers and sisters, God has not called us to *agitate* on the campus questions of institutional policies, and get people to discuss things about what ought to be done in a way that brings debate and difference.

I hope you all read the beautiful appeal made by the president of the General Conference in the *Review and Herald* of a few weeks ago. It was an open letter to the church. In consultation with all the vice presidents, the president has made an appeal to the church to quit thinking that the way to get light is to have discussion, discussion, discussion, discussion on theological questions on which there is a difference of opinion.

Our president has made an earnest appeal that there even be a cessation of the circulation of a lot of tapes and mimeographed material on these subjects. I am so glad, dear friend, for the appeal he made to *all* our members to study for themselves in the original sources of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

As far as I know, there is no debate going on at Wildwood on these questions, but I have mentioned it for two reasons. First, I want you to know that it is our



privilege to support the leadership of the church in this appeal. And second, I want to use it as an illustration of a principle. The way to bring unity is not to think of anything that could possibly divide us and to agitate and agitate and agitate that. No.

The prophet of God wrote an interesting letter to a man who had a great burden to make his wife a saint like himself, you understand. And the prophet wrote in this testimony and she said,

“Instead of courteously avoiding, as a gentleman would, discussing subjects on which you don't agree, you even weave them into your prayers and into your worship study.”  
*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, page 418.*

Do you get the picture? Here are a husband and wife who don't agree. The husband, of course, he was what? Head of the house. So when they conducted worship, what was the worship study on? Well, what he and the wife didn't agree on

Well, you say, “Of course. How is there going to be unity unless I study with her?”

Then when we get down and pray, what do we pray about? “Lord, help my wife to agree with me. Help her to see the light.”

Well, you can substitute something else for the word “wife.” Department heads, roommate, fellow worker, Sabbath School teacher, whoever it is that you and that brother or sister don't quite do the same or see the same on some point. Oh brothers and sisters, let us learn Jesus' way. The same night Jesus said to His disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you can't bear them now.” Could you live with someone for three years and then still don't know how to tell them everything you thought they ought to know? Some people can get it done in three weeks. [Laughter]

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,  
if ye have love one to another” John 13:35.

Brothers and sisters, I thank God for the blessed hope that all we've studied about tonight is going to happen, and *is* happening. I pray that God will give us all eyes to see, and to settle for nothing less than the one hundred percent fulfillment of God's promises.

Unless the Latter Rain falls, we'll still be around here in another generation, friends. I want Jesus to come now, what do you say? Is it worth sacrificing our personal feelings, our personal dignity? Is it worth being willing to confess our sins?

Do you know, every one of the 11 disciples confessed in that upper room. Every one of them. They all got down to business. Instead of John confessing Peter's faults, he confessed his own faults. Instead of Peter pointing out what a selfish person John and James had been, John and James were the ones who told their brethren that they did the wrong thing and were sorry.

So if you want to contribute to making this a grand old apple tree that continues to produce *bushels* of apples for the world market, let us settle down to learning this lesson of becoming a *part* of the tree. Let's settle down to developing that *love* and that *unity* for which Jesus prayed, of which the world knows nothing of, and which many in the church thinks impossible.

Brethren and sisters, do we believe that God's plan of educational reform is still relevant? Do we believe His plan of medical work is still up to date? Do we believe His plan of diet and dress, and all the rest, is relevant? Oh, how much *more* this *fundamental* thing of love and unity.

May God add His blessing.

[A man offers the following prayer:]

Father, which art in Heaven, we thank Thee tonight for this excellent spiritual X-ray. And we pray that Thou wilt help us to come to Thee and to receive just that wisdom and the light and love that each one of us needs. Oh, know that every person here tonight is needed on Thy team. And we pray that Thou give us such unity with Jesus, that unity with one another will be possible, practical and truthful, and a very happy state to be in.

We know it's pleasant for folks to dwell together in unity. Lord, we know that when this takes place, there will be a spiritual-*critical* mass develop, and people see if Christianity is *real*, if Heaven is *real*, behold how they love one another. Bring that glorious state into our lives soon. We know that it doesn't need to take years; we do not *have* years.

Help us to press forward and press together, to do Thy work in the world. We thank Thee for this occasion tonight. May it not be just an appointment or a hurdle, but may it be a fine spiritual beginning of finer, better things in the future. And Lord, we pray that Thou will give us such practical unity that souls may be won to Thy kingdom. Precious souls, patients and students, relatives and friends, contacts and customers—whoever they need be and wherever they need be. And may this be in our faces, reflected from our hearts and minds and lives, a little bit of the peace and unity of Heaven.

Help us to go forward, and we thank Thee, Lord, for this meeting tonight. And now we pray that Thou will help us to arrive as one man to seek Thee. Help us to pray more and talk less. Help us to study more and educate less. Help us to go forward in faith. We thank Thee, Lord, for the scripture that stretches before the true Christian.

We pray that Thou will bless the apple tree here at Wildwood. In a very special sense, water it with Thy rain, shine upon it with Thy loving sunshine. And we pray that not *one* soul may leave the apple tree either green or wormy. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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