Independent Ministries: Beware of the hidden trap!

Many independent ministries have arisen to spread truth when the various denominations failed to advance with the light. Sadly, most if not all of these ministries have likewise failed to follow ever-increasing light. Heaven calls all to stand apart from any organization that would impede the advancement of truth.

If awards were granted for good intentions with calamitous results, surely Hastein Ragnarsson would be given at least an honorable mention. Hastein was a Viking. He lusted after the gold, glory and bragging rights to be gained by conquering Rome. So, in AD 859, he set off with 62 ships to garner that gold, glory and bragging rights.

At first, the raiding and pillaging did not go well. But, practice making perfect, by the time they reached the Mediterranean, they were doing well at their chosen vocation.

They were bad! They were fierce! They were the VIKINGS!

Arriving at Rome, they set about attacking the city. When they couldn't penetrate the venerable old walls, Hastein huddled with his men and devised an alternate plan to get inside the city.

The next day, Hastein was carried on a stretcher to the city gates. His men announced to the watching Romans: “Help us! Lord Hastein is dying. He wants to be baptized as a Christian before he dies.”

This posed a real problem to the Romans. On the one hand, they naturally did not want to let the enemy inside the gates. On the other hand, how could they call themselves Christian and deny a dying pagan salvation? (Being Roman, not Greek, we’ll give them the benefit of the doubt and assume they had never heard of the Trojan horse.)

So, the Romans opened the gates and allowed a small contingent of Vikings to carry their leader to the church. Upon being baptized and receiving the last rites, Hastein was miraculously cured! Leaping to his feet, he and his men fought their way to the city gates to let the rest of their men in. By evening, Rome had been destroyed...

...At which point Hastein learned that the town he had just sacked was not Rome, but Luna. Rome was over 250 miles away!

It was a classic “comedy of errors.” Undoubtedly funnier to observers than the actual participants!

Scripture presents a similar “comedy of errors.” At first glance, the extremes of the situation are such that one would almost expect it to be the plot line of a cartoon. The passage is trying to describe how bad something is and uses this simile: “As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.” (Amos 5:19, KJV)
It is almost farcical: the little cartoon guy, running as fast as he can in one direction to escape from a lion, only to skid to a halt as he comes face to face with a bear. Next frame shows his pin-wheeling legs kicking up clouds of dust as he races to his house and slams the door. In immense relief, he slumps against the wall, only to have a snake bite him. It’s just the sort of extreme scenario, drawn out in cartoons, that have made generations of children giggle with hilarity.

But when read in context, the laughter stops. Horror builds. What is being described is an event millions are looking forward to! And yet, this passage presents a completely different perspective. Not of joy and anticipation, but of horror and calamity.

The verse, when read in context, states:

> Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahuwah! to what end is it for you? the day of Yahuwah is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of Yahuwah be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? (Amos 5:18-20, KJV)

Wait. What? This isn't some silly cartoon. This is describing “the day of Yahuwah”! The day of Yahuwah refers to the Second Coming, of course, but it can also refer to the time of trouble that precedes the Second Coming. Used in this sense, it is understandable that the day of Yahuwah would be viewed with a healthy amount of awe and fear. The very worst part of the great time of trouble, as the plagues are being poured out, is so bad it is referred to in Scripture as “Jacob’s time of trouble.”

But even then, the passage is followed up immediately by a promise of deliverance: “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.” (Jeremiah 30:7, KJV)

The passage in Amos is talking about something different. Something so dangerous, there is no comforting softening to the text. It is a blunt warning. Nothing more.

The one repeating theme in the dire warnings of Amos is that the day of Yahuwah is darkness not light. And it is stated repeatedly. Any time something is repeated in Scripture, it means Yahuwah has established it, so you better sit up and take notice. Joseph explained this principle to Pharaoh: “And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by Yah, and Yahuwah will shortly bring it to pass.” (Genesis 41:32, KJV)

> Three times the warning of darkness is repeated in Amos. “Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahuwah!...The day of Yahuwah is darkness, and not light...Shall not the day of Yahuwah be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?” (Amos 5:18-20, KJV) Whatever the threat is, it is genuine and the peril to the soul is extreme. There is no comedy of errors here. The danger is real.

But how can darkness be dangerous? So, the moon is darkened and the sun shall not give her light. So what? Jeremiah promises that the righteous shall be saved out of it!
The danger is that this is not physical darkness being spoken of here. It is spiritual darkness, the most dangerous kind. David wrote: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105, KJV) If Yahuwah’s word, which is truth, is symbolized as light, then it stands to reason that “darkness” would be error. The greatest danger for the people of Yah in the time of trouble is spiritual error. The threat is so extreme Amos cannot seem to stop himself from repeating the warning over and over.

This warning is unexpected! After all, Gabriel promised Daniel: “Knowledge shall be increased.” (Daniel 12:4, KJV)

With increased light, however, comes increased danger as people become complacent and confident. The boast of the Laodiceans is that they are rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing, while the True Witness declares: “Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Revelation 3:17, KJV)

The absolute worst spiritual darkness into which a person can fall in these last days is not any single doctrinal error. It is the arrogant assumption that he already knows all the truths necessary for salvation. This assumption leads to another one that, in its way, is even more dangerous. This is the belief that, since he already has all the light necessary to be saved, any new light is, by default, wrong. Such an assumption closes the mind to any additional rays of light the Spirit of Yah might bring. The bright, clear beams of light cannot penetrate a heart that is hardened and battened down against any new light.

It is a fact that we have the truth, and we must hold with tenacity to the positions that cannot be shaken; but we must not look with suspicion upon any new light which [Yah] may send, and say, Really, we cannot see that we need any more light than the old truth which we have hitherto received, and in which we are settled. While we hold to this position, the testimony of the True Witness applies to our cases its rebuke, “And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Those who feel rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, are in a condition of blindness as to their true condition before [Yahuwah], and they know it not.¹

The danger of falling into the darkness of spiritual arrogance is so great WLC is compelled to raise the warning. And there is one area in particular where this threat is greatest because it is unrecognized. This is the independent ministries.

**Giving The Trumpet A Certain Sound**

The independent ministries have done a wonderful work for Yahuwah in spreading truth. As the churches became more worldly and failed to advance in the truth, Heaven entrusted increased light to many different individuals who, in turn, worked hard to share what they had been given. WLC, too, has been blessed by gathering the precious rays of light scattered among the many independent ministries.

The explosion of the Internet has enabled many common lay people to spread truth much further than previously possible. Many of these individuals and their ministries have suffered persecution by the organized denominations. The churches have felt threatened by the influence of these humble lay people. Independent ministries have been denounced from the pulpit, from church publications and some have even been taken to court by the fallen churches fighting against them.

Satan is well aware of the success of the independent ministries in spreading truth. He has launched an insidious and, tragically, very effective assault against them. Satan’s attack has been aimed in two different directions. He has attacked:

1. The leaders of the independent ministries.
2. The individuals who have gained light from the independent ministries.

**The Leaders:** The sad truth is that most of the independent ministries have themselves followed the example of the churches that persecuted them. Their reliance on the financial contributions of their followers has made most hesitate to teach unpopular truths. Thus, most have refused any additional light in advance of the truth they have already been given. When new light has been brought to their attention, they have not only turned their backs on it, but they have used their perceived authority as light-bearers to influence their followers to also reject advanced light. There is nothing wrong
with an independent ministry choosing to focus its website or publications on a particular area. This point cannot be overstated. However, the problem arises when the leaders denounce all other light given as wrong.
**The Followers:** Many sincere souls have been blessed with the light given to the independent ministries. Heaven does not give all truth to any one individual so that all may share in the joy of discovery. This is why no individual or independent ministry should ever take a stance against the light given another. Many honest truth-seekers have been led from one church to another, then from one independent ministry to another, gathering a ray of light here, another there. Everyone starts at a different point in his or her journey. The problem is when one becomes a follower of an *organization* rather than an independent truth-seeker.

If a person has a “follower” mentality, he or she is not truly following the Lamb withersoever He goeth. Instead, he is following a human authority figure. This is why Satan has attacked the independent ministries. By appealing to spiritual pride, he can get them to arrogantly denounce light that has been entrusted to others. Simply because Heaven has graciously granted you light should by no means be taken as proof that no more light is to be revealed.

The danger is very real and it is precisely why WLC has joined its voice with that of the fourth angel in Revelation 18, declaring: “*Go out of her, my people,* that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4, 1599 Geneva Bible)

This text is very important. It is typically translated as “Come out of her.” However, *to come* is an invitation. It creates in the mind of the listener the false idea that the organization issuing the invitation is somehow exempt and that one can safely join it. This could not be further from the truth. None are exempt from this divine order. It is an *imperious command:* *Go!*

“*Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of Yahuwah’s vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*” (Jeremiah 51:6, KJV)

**The Danger Is Real**

A person who, in the past, has gained precious light from a church, group or independent ministry, is at risk of becoming entangled through a sense of loyalty or affection. Should the group reject advanced light, it is tempting to stay with the group, rather than step free of it and follow truth wherever it leads.
I saw a number of companies that seemed to be bound together by cords. Many in these companies were in total darkness; their eyes were directed downward to the earth, and there seemed to be no connection between them and [Yahushua]. But scattered through these different companies were persons whose countenances looked light, and whose eyes were raised to heaven. Beams of light from [Yahushua], like rays from the sun, were imparted to them. An angel bade me look carefully, and I saw an angel watching over every one of those who had a ray of light, while evil angels surrounded those who were in darkness. I heard the voice of an angel cry, “Fear [Yahuwah], and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.”

A glorious light then rested down upon these companies, to enlighten all who would receive it. Some of those who were in darkness received the light and rejoiced. Others resisted the light from heaven, saying that it was sent to lead them astray. The light passed away from them, and they were left in darkness. Those who had received the light from [Yahushua] joyfully cherished the increase of precious light which was shed upon them. Their faces beamed with holy joy, while their gaze was directed upward to [Yahushua] with intense interest, and their voices were heard in harmony with the voice of the angel, “Fear [Yahuwah], and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” As they raised this cry, I saw those who were in darkness thrusting them with side and with shoulder. Then many who cherished the sacred light, broke the cords which confined them and stood out separated from those companies. As they were doing this, men belonging to the different companies and revered by them passed through, some with pleasing words, and others with wrathful looks and threatening gestures, and fastened the cords which were weakening. These men were constantly saying, “[Yahuwah] is with us. We stand in the light. We have the truth.” I inquired who these men were, and was told that they were ministers and leading men who had rejected the light themselves, and were unwilling that others should receive it.

... Then I heard a voice saying to those who had been pushed and derided, “Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean.” In obedience to this voice, a large number broke the cords which bound them, and leaving the companies that were in darkness, joined those who had previously gained their freedom, and joyfully united their voices with them. I heard the voice of earnest, agonizing prayer from a few who still remained with the companies that were in darkness. The ministers and leading men were passing around in these different companies, fastening the cords more firmly; but still I heard this voice of earnest prayer. Then I saw those who had been praying reach out their hands for help toward the united company who were free, rejoicing in [Yahuwah]. The answer from them, as they earnestly looked to heaven, and pointed upward, was, “Come out from among them, and be separate.” I saw individuals struggling for freedom, and at last they broke the cords that bound them. They resisted the efforts which were made to fasten the cords tighter and refused to heed the repeated assertions: “[Yahuwah] is with us.” “We have the truth with us.”

Persons were continually leaving the companies that were in darkness and joining the free company, who appeared to be in an open field raised above the earth. Their gaze was directed upward, the glory of [Yah] rested upon them, and they joyfully shouted His praise. They were closely united and seemed to be wrapped in the light of heaven. Around this company were some who came under the influence of the light, but who were not particularly united to the company. All who cherished the light shed upon them were gazing upward with intense interest, and [Yahushua] looked upon them with sweet approbation.²

Do not let the fear of having to worship alone keep you from stepping free. The lack of a group with whom to worship is no excuse to continue to align yourself with any organization or company that is actively rejecting light.
None are to surrender their own mind and conscience to another, taking the word of someone else for what is truth. Yahuwah is leading each one individually. Each person must be led alone, because each one comes from a different background, with a different set of beliefs. As knowledge is increased, the need for divine wisdom also increases. Not all “new” light is truth. It requires spiritual discernment to differentiate between what is to be accepted, and what is to be laid aside.

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Do not give in to the temptation to follow the leadership of this independent ministry or that spiritual fellowship. It is perfectly natural to want to surround yourself with like-minded believers. It is affirming to worship with those who believe as you do. It is encouraging to read articles that agree with your current beliefs. However, the danger of becoming a follower of an independent ministry is exactly the same danger that exists with being a member of an organized denomination, bound by their specific creed. When a leader you respect, or an organization from which you have learned truth, takes a stance against other truths, it is too easy to follow their example. One should never take the word of another human for what is truth and reject other light without studying it out for oneself.

Love for truth should take precedence over any desire to be with a group. Satan uses the desire to belong to instill a fear of separation. This can silence the voice of the Spirit.

The very nature of a group creates an US versus THEM dynamic. Members are taught to accept the beliefs of the majority. Worse still, they are taught to not question. Therefore, active truth seeking is discouraged. Those who persist in questioning are frequently shunned. Finally, they are expelled from the group. Conformance is thus enforced through emotional blackmail.

If you have been expelled from a group, do not allow it to discourage you. Certainly you can continue to pray for friends and loved ones still deceived, but all of Yahuwah’s heroes, all the spiritual giants of the past, have been called to stand alone. John the Baptist was a man of the solitudes and wastes of the desert. Alone, he heard the Spirit speaking to his own soul, preparing him for a great work as the forerunner of the Messiah. John Bunyan spent 12 years in the Bedford County Jail for refusing to stay silent on the light given him. But during those 12 years, the Spirit of Yahuwah inspired him to write Pilgrim’s Progress, a work containing deep spiritual truths that have blessed many in the centuries since he scratched it out in his cold, stone cell. Martin Luther, likewise, was called to stand before priests and prelates, entrusted with a truth that would set free the souls of multitudes.

Following truth is a very solitary path. When called to stand alone, do not shrink back. Count yourself honored of Heaven. Use the time alone to grow still closer and closer to the source of all light and truth.
Embrace All Truth!

This side of Heaven, it is impossible for any mortal intellect to grasp all truth. Throughout all eternity, the redeemed will be studying into the deep things of Yahuwah and continue to learn of Him.

WLC is a platform for disseminating all truth that has been revealed to us. This includes unpopular truths. Occasionally, angry responses come in where the writer declares: “I did not join WLC to accept this error or that error.” Brethren, WLC is not trying to please man. Only Yahuwah. Once light has been revealed to our understanding, we seek to spread it far and wide.

Heaven today is commanding all to stand apart and separate and touch not the unclean. There are fewer things more unclean than a spiritual pride that boasts in what one knows, but refuses to acknowledge any additional light.

When we acknowledge that the True Witness knows our condition better than we ever could, He will give us His righteousness to cover our nakedness, His purity for our sinfulness and the heavenly gold of faith. Then will be fulfilled His precious promise:

Behold, the days come, saith Yahuwah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith Yahuwah, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahuwah: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahuwah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34, KJV)

* Sacred Names have been supplied in all Scripture quotes.

1 E. G. White, Review & Herald, August 7, 1894.
E. G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 240-243, emphasis supplied. This particular vision dealt at length with the experiences of the early Adventists when they were disappointed that Yahushua did not return when expected. However, the lessons learned through their experience are for all time and are just as applicable to Yah’s people today, as they were then. The visions were given, in part, so that Yah’s people today could learn the lessons from the past.