Commentary: Let s be in one accord

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In obedience to Jesus' instruction, the disciples returned to Jerusalem after His ascension to prepare for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Luke, in the Book of Acts, mentions one of these preparatory steps twice: "These all continued with one accord in prayer" (Acts 1:14), and "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord" (Acts 2:1). The disciples were finally united -- they were one.

Throughout the gospel narrative, these men were continually at odds with one another. How many times did Jesus rebuke them and tell them that the humblest will be the greatest? But they continued debating who among them was to be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom. The last night that the disciples met with Jesus to celebrate the Passover, "There was 'a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.'" (Ellen White in Desire of Ages, p. 643.) Shortly before this the mother of James and John had asked Jesus to grant to her sons the honor of sitting at His right and left hands in the kingdom. The ten were enraged at this bold request and held bitter feelings against the brothers. These feelings had to be put aside if the disciples were to receive the power of God's Spirit. The Spirit of God cannot dwell in a heart that holds jealousy, hatred and bitterness towards a brother or sister in Christ. Fortunately, except for Judas, the experience with Jesus in the upper room that night removed all of these feelings. Self was laid aside, and God took control of their lives.

This experience was crucial in the disciples' preparation to receive the power of God's Spirit. It is to be the experience of God's people today as they prepare for the latter rain. Ellen White gives us this counsel in Selected Messages Book 1, p. 175, "When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God's promise will never fail in one jot or tittle."

God wants unity and mutual trust displayed in His church. Jesus' prayer for His followers was that they would be one as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). Love and unity in the church will stir up the anger and wrath of Satan. He knows that such an experience will open the flood gates of divine power. God's people will become channels through which this power will enlighten the world, and Satan will lose control over many of his captives.

Acts tells us that during the ten days of preparation the disciples were found continually in prayer, and they had united in one accord. They were well on their way to the Day of Pentecost, but more had to be done before God would trust them with the power of the Spirit.

How close are we to receiving the power that will enable us to finish God's work on earth?

--Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church