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of Ronald L. Numbers

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Adventist *Today*



**SCHOLARS
DISCOVER
ELLEN—
FINALLY**



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The Curious Case of the Ordaining of Deaconesses

By J. David Newman

The church has been debating for some 40 years whether or not women can be ordained as pastors. What is not so well known is how long it took for women to be ordained as deaconesses.

On April 3, 1975, the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee voted the following: “That the way be opened for women elected to serve as deaconesses in our churches to be ordained to this office and that the Church Manual Committee be requested to give study to a statement of the qualifications of deaconesses and suggestions in regard to a suitable ordination service.”¹

The Executive Committee voted that deaconesses be ordained and that the Church Manual Committee should suggest a suitable ordination service. Note the date of this action: April 3, 1975. When did the Church Manual Committee respond? Not until 2010, some 35 years later, and then only in part.

The 18th edition of the *Church Manual*, 2010, adopts a curious stance to this subject. Nowhere does it explicitly state that a deaconess should be ordained, as it states for the elder. Under ordination of elders, the *Manual* states: “Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function.”²

For deaconesses, the *Manual* states: “Deaconesses should be chosen for their consecration and other qualifications that fit them for the duties of the office.”³ In just two places does it state that deaconesses may be ordained. One is a reference to the organizing of churches. There the *Church Manual* states that when a new church has been organized and a nominating committee has nominated the church officers, “the elders should be ordained. ... A similar but shorter service should take place for ordination of deacons and deaconesses.”⁴ The second begins with the heading “Ordination Service for Deaconesses” and states: “Such a service would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference.”⁵

The Adventist Church is now in an impossible situation. It has voted that women can be ordained as elders. It has voted that women can be ordained as deaconesses. It has voted that women can serve

as pastors—some as senior pastors. But while the call to elder, deacon, and deaconess is signified by ordination, the call to pastor (for a woman) is signified by commissioning.

Here we are simply playing with words. The woman pastor can lead in the communion service, baptize, and marry couples—all that the male pastor can do. The male pastor has hands laid on him, and it is called *ordination*. The female pastor has hands laid on her, and it is called *commissioning*.

At the General Conference Session in San Antonio in 2015, the Church needs to make one of two decisions: either to sweep away the semantic word play and vote to ordain women, or to stop playing games and vote that women can no longer serve as pastors and elders. If it votes the latter, what would happen to the current women pastors and elders? Perhaps they would continue to serve, but no new women pastors would be trained and admitted to ministry and no women elders would be elected. There are a few people (proponents of headship theology) who would vote the latter, but I believe they would be a very small minority. The contribution of women elders and pastors is so great and so significant that few would want to do away with their ministry.

Let us not repeat the long delay on the ordaining of deaconesses. It is time for full gender equality. The ordination of women as pastors has become a moral issue. It is no longer a theological issue. The church has voted that women can serve as pastors, performing nearly all of the functions of a male pastor.⁶ The only reason they are not ordained is because of gender. That is discrimination based on gender, not on qualifications. If the denomination were a business, this would have been settled by the courts long ago. Why should Seventh-day Adventists be the last to recognize reality and to be fair and just in calling men and women to pastoral roles?

¹ See documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1975-04.pdf

² *Church Manual*, 2010, p. 72.

³ *ibid.*, p. 78.

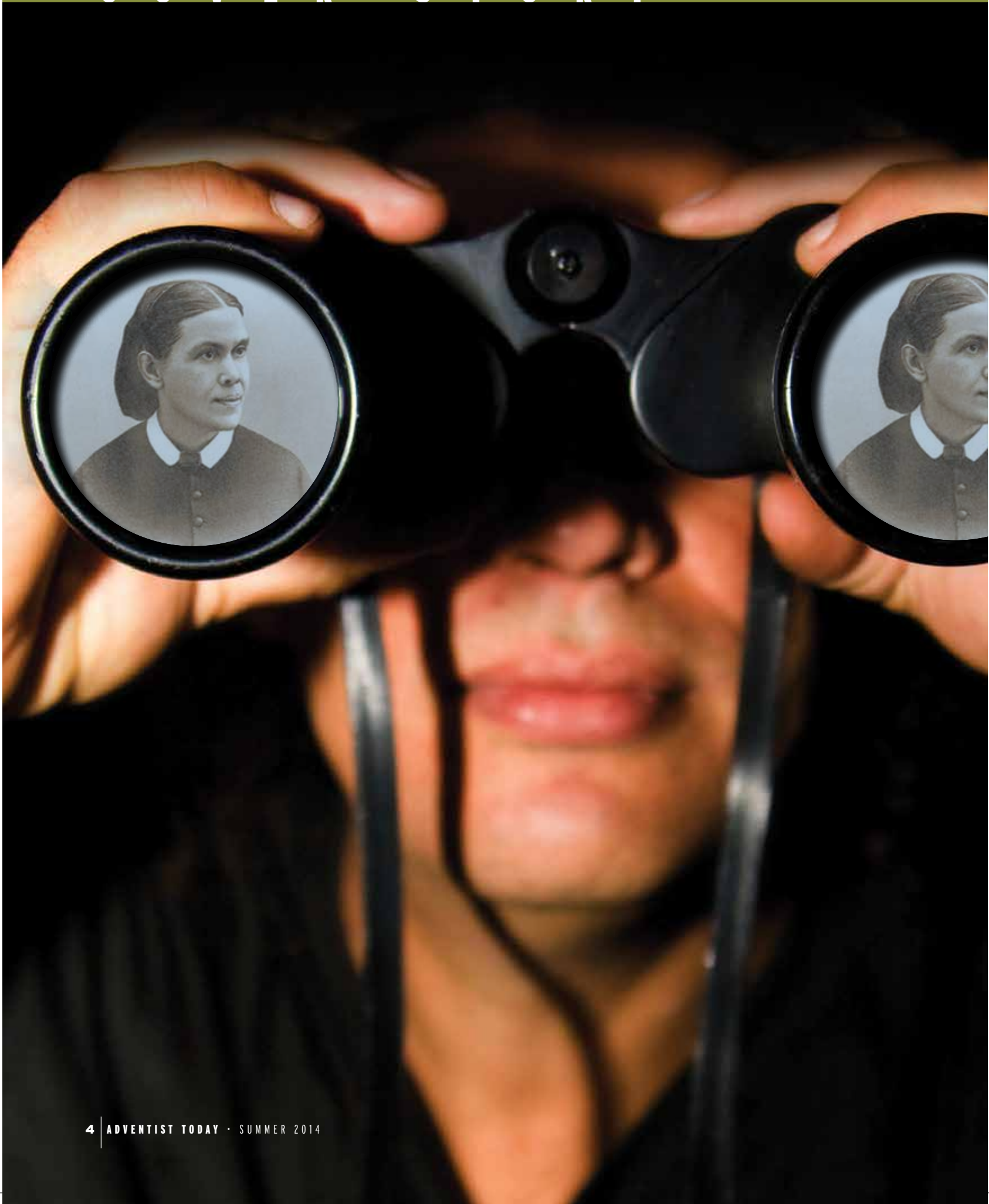
⁴ *ibid.*, p. 38.


⁵ *ibid.*, p. 78.

⁶ There is one strange exception. Women pastors cannot ordain elders, organize churches, or unite churches.

Let us not repeat the long delay on the ordaining of deaconesses. It is time for full gender equality.

C O V E R S T O R Y



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a magnifying glass. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on a small, circular portrait of Ellen G. White, showing her face and dark hair. The background is dark and out of focus.

SCHOLARS DISCOVER ELLEN— FINALLY

Given that Adventism is larger than Mormonism and will soon be twice the size of Judaism, it is somewhat surprising that the denomination's leading spirit, Ellen G. White, has remained such a well-kept secret. Well, that's about to change, thanks largely to Ronald L. Numbers.

Numbers was critically celebrated at Loma Linda University (LLU) this spring for his contribution to the church's historiographical revolution and, ironically, it was that same institution that nearly four decades earlier unceremoniously fired him for writing *Ellen White: Prophetess of Health*, the path-breaking first book in the revolution in history writing that is the subject of this cluster of essays.

Under the auspices of its humanities program, LLU convened a panel of diverse church historians and scholars on Sabbath afternoon, May 31, to dialogue with Numbers about the state

of historical scholarship in Adventist studies, particularly regarding Ellen White. Significantly, this event came on the heels of the publication of *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* (Oxford, 2014), edited by Numbers along with Terrie Aamodt and the late Gary Land.

The panelists—church historians Terrie Aamodt, Jonathan Butler, and Ted Levterov, and LLU School of Religion dean Jon Paulien—gave précises of their essays that appear in this cluster, and Numbers also responded. Jim Walters wrote a complementary essay on the 100-year quest for the historical Ellen White, in which he provides the historical context for the quest and names many of the new scholarly books coming out. The four history scholars were invited to make conceptual sense of this new quest; what is its meaning?

RONALD L. NUMBERS AND THE NEW QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL ELLEN G. WHITE

BY JIM WALTERS

It is difficult to overestimate the value—or disvalue—of the quest for the historical Ellen White.¹ For those who appreciate an objective account of Ellen G. White in an accurately reconstructed setting, the quest is essential. But for those who prefer the spiritual comfort of traditional accounts, historical constructions can be unnerving. A sixtysomething woman, whom I know well, probably typified many conflicted Adventists when she recently remarked: “I see the value of historical accounts, but that doesn’t mean I have to like them.”

The quest for the historical Ellen White can be divided into three discrete phases. The original quest was led by key administrators of the denomination in the years immediately following the prophet’s death; the second quest was led by young Adventist academics beginning in the late 1960s; and the new quest is being led by professional historians—Adventist, non-practicing Adventist, and non-Adventist.

The Original Quest

The earliest quest began almost a century ago at a Bible conference of 65 of the denomination’s top administrative, educational, and editorial leaders. It was 1919, just four years after White’s death, and a leading question was how the church’s prophet should be presented to the fledgling church of 165,000 members, given that a significant number of members had elevated her to unrealistic heights. Some leaders who knew Ellen White well, such as former General Conference President A.G. Daniells, were more realistic. Daniells was a leading advocate for a more human understanding of the prophet—a position that would three years later contribute to his loss of the presidency. Daniells was joined by other older leaders, such as W.W. Prescott, H.C. Lacey, and D.E. Robinson, who was White’s secretary for 13 years. Robinson candidly spoke of how White had wanted her assistants to “make everything accurate” as a new 1911 edition of *Great Controversy* was being prepared.

However, a younger generation of leaders, such as Claude Holmes and J.S. Washburn, were threatened by such views and saw the 1919 Bible Conference as “the most terrible thing

that had ever happened in the history of this denomination.”² Although today the Ellen White issue is of chief concern, in 1919 it was considered more important to settle the identity of the King of the North: Papacy or Turkey? Because of the controversial nature of the Bible Conference discussions, leaders decided to not publish the transcripts.

Don Yost, director of the General Conference archives four decades ago, coincidentally discovered the transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference in 1975. Don Mansell, an Ellen G. White Estate associate, was researching Armageddon and noticed references to the topic being discussed at a Bible Conference held in 1919. When he mentioned that to Yost, the archives director recalled that he’d seen a wrapped package of material with that label among unfiled material he’d been sorting through, so he gave the package to the researcher. Mansell, sensing that the transcripts were important, made an index, and soon copies of the 1919 Bible Conference material were sent to the White Estate branch offices on the university campuses of Andrews, Oakwood, and Loma Linda. These are the basic details of the discovery, as recent church archivist Bert Haloviak understands them.

That the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts would be lost from sight for more than 50 years is not unusual, given their controversial nature and the natural conserving trend that typically follows the death of a founding leader. At the 1922 General Conference Session, Washburn and Holmes and their associates successfully got Daniells and other key participants of the 1919 meetings demoted. Columbia Union Conference officials in particular were suspicious that General Conference leadership wavered on belief in Ellen White’s prophetic gift, and they went so far as to distribute partisan leaflets to Session delegates.

Following Protestant reformer Martin Luther’s death, a similarly conservative mentality set in, according to Robert Kolb in his book *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher and Hero*.³ Kolb notes Luther’s escalating influence as a prophetic voice that replaced popes and councils, a prophetic teacher of the biblical message, and a prophetic hero who was God’s chosen instrument and who was raised to almost mythical status in Lutheran Germany.

The Second Quest

Once transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference arrived at Loma Linda, it was not surprising that Molleurus Couperus, *Spectrum* magazine’s inquisitive editor from 1969 to 1975, would discover this material and sense its tremendous importance to the renewed quest for the historical Ellen White. Without asking anyone’s

permission, he published extended excerpts in *Spectrum* in 1979, significantly adding impetus to research into the prophet's humanity that was well underway.

This second quest began with a crucial cluster of young, dedicated Adventists who earned advanced degrees in humanities disciplines in the 1960s: Don McAdams (European history, Duke); Bill Peterson (Victorian literature, Northwestern); Herold Weiss (Biblical studies, Duke); Roy Branson (Christian ethics, Harvard); and Ron Numbers (history, UC Berkeley). In the late '60s, cousins Branson and Numbers and friends organized the somewhat elitist Association of Adventist Forums, inviting Molleurus Couperus, an independent-minded physician at Loma Linda University, to be editor of its new publication, *Spectrum*.

The autumn 1970 issue of the magazine was especially important, for it carried several articles that would lead to a shaking of the conservative Adventist movement—one that had largely grown without a knowledge of the church prophet's working methods, which were somewhat familiar to her contemporaries. For example, in that issue Branson and Weiss called for discovery of "the real Ellen White," believing such an approach would show a "more vibrant Ellen White... a more believable person," who would become "actually more authoritative."⁴ Two young scholars who did the formative research into White's literary practices were McAdams and Peterson. In that pivotal issue of *Spectrum*, Peterson's "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution" is noteworthy.

Just as there was pushback in 1919 to the candid discussion of the historical Ellen White, there has been reaction to the growing sophistication of Adventist scholarship in history and religion. However, visible reaction was delayed this time around. Whereas the effects of the 1919 Bible Conference push toward greater candor about Ellen White's humanity took only three years to materialize, nearly two decades passed before there was a formal reaction to accumulating evidence of the humanity of the writers of the church's sacred texts—Scripture and "the Spirit of Prophecy." In 1988 the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) formed to counter the Andrews Society of Religious Studies (later named the Adventist Society of Religious Studies, or ASRS) and in direct reaction to a perception that theologically conservative scholars were not sufficiently recognized in mainstream Adventism. Although the announced reason for forming ATS had nothing to do with the renewed quest for the historical Ellen White, it is likely not coincidental that acceptance of critical scholarship in sacred texts was increasingly the norm among mainstream Adventist scholars.

Today there are signs of collegiality between ATS and ASRS scholars; the two groups share a common meal on Friday night during their annual national meetings—held separately but in the same city—and hear papers on a common theme delivered by the presidents of the respective societies. However, despite the symbolic meal, polarity seems to be growing. For example, not only does ATS meet in conjunction with the national meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), but increasing numbers of ATS members are joining ETS and signing the mandatory ETS vow to believe in the "inerrancy" of the Bible. A longtime friend recently acknowledged that he'd signed the ETS vow, but only after heated protest to ETS leadership. My friend so appreciated ETS's view of scripture as containing timeless propositional truths that he chose to cross his fingers while signing a declaration so opposed by Ellen White, who wrote: "The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. ... Everything that is human is imperfect. ... It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired."⁵ Adventists, left and right, have long articulated abhorrence for Scriptural inerrancy.

Whereas ATS began as a reaction to mainline religion scholarship in Adventism, it now claims the theological allegiance of key elements within the denomination—Ted Wilson, the GC president, and many of his fellow officers; the majority of the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University; and almost the entire religion faculty of Southern Adventist University, where ATS was founded. Several years ago a close friend, then a faculty member at the Andrews University seminary, told me that he didn't know of any of his fellow faculty members who held the moral-influence theory of Christ's atonement. I am personally acquainted with many of the ATS leaders and know them to be highly intelligent, learned scholars. What Numbers said of creationists applies to the church's theologically conservative scholars: "Strict creationists may have opposed elite science, but they developed an alternative tradition that in some ways was just as 'intellectual' as the one they rejected. What most distinguished the leading creationists from their evolutionary counterparts was not intellect or integrity but cosmology and epistemology."⁶

The conservative religion scholars' views currently dominate the church and are growing in influence. For example, a recent president of ATS is Tom Shepherd, a professor of New Testament and director of the PhD program at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Currently he is directing the programs of some 100 doctoral students, whereas LLU's School of Religion—known for its moderate if not liberal

character—has only recently considered developing a PhD program and just initiated a doctor of Science (DSc) degree.

Comment on the second quest for the historical Ellen White would not be complete without reference to George R. Knight, a convert to Adventism in the 1970s through the efforts of evangelist Ralph Larson. Knight earned his EdD at the University of Houston and joined the Andrews University education department, but soon he developed an interest in Adventist history. He transferred to his university's seminary history department, where he became a top-selling author of Adventist literature in the 1990s. Knight is not only an insightful, engaging writer, but he has also mentored a new generation of Adventist church historians, perhaps typified by Jerry Moon, co-editor of *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Review and Herald, 2014), who describes its philosophy as “non-apologetic as far as possible.”⁷ In a denomination where the majority are theologically very conservative, a number of church histories understandably continue to engage in some shade of apologetics—although books such as F.D. Nichol's *The Midnight Cry*, in which

impressively human Ellen White. And whereas the former featured Adventists writing to Adventists, with a few non-Adventists looking on, the latter consists of Adventists and non-Adventists writing mostly for non-Adventists, with a few Adventists noticing. A younger, more religious and anxious Ron Numbers was in the middle of the second quest, whereas an older, less religious, and more relaxed Numbers is a leader in the new quest.

A bridge between the second and third phases of the quest for the historical Ellen White began at Loma Linda University with the publication of Numbers' *Prophetess of Health* in 1976. In the book's preface, Numbers writes: “(T)his is, I believe, the first book about her [Ellen White] that seeks neither to defend nor to damn but simply to understand. As one raised and educated within Adventism, I admittedly have more than an academic interest in Mrs. White's historical fate; but I have tried to be as objective as possible. Thus I have refrained from using divine inspiration as an historical explanation.”

Numbers' 1976 book, published by Harper & Row, spanned the second and third quests. And now, the 2014 Oxford anthology—which would have been inconceivable without Numbers—epitomizes the third phase of the quest: constructive, positive, ecumenical, publically oriented, and joyfully edited.

A number of similar products of scholarship have followed in the wake of Numbers' notable works (three editions of *Prophetess of Health* and two versions of *The Creationists*), and now several new research projects on Ellen White and related topics have recently been published, are currently underway, or are planned, including:

- The Oxford University Press anthology *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, edited by Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, was published in April 2014. According to the publisher's website, it is the “First comprehensive scholarly treatment of Ellen White's life, career, and cultural context.”⁸ Further, it “measures White's contribution to the development of Adventist theology in a new, comprehensive way” and “Re-contextualizes White's published spiritual advice letters, or testimonies” and “Offers the most comprehensive assessment of biographers' and historians' response to White in the final historiographical essay.”⁹

- Ronald D. Graybill is planning to revise and update his 1983 dissertation, “The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century,” for publication and to title the ensuing book *Ellen G. White: The Life and the Legend*. He plans to review all of the relevant literature that has been published in the last 30 years, to include reviews of and comments on the image of Ellen White that have been advanced over the years by the church in articles and books, and

A younger, more religious and anxious Ron Numbers was in the middle of the second quest, whereas an older, less religious, and more relaxed Numbers is a leader in the new quest.

apologetics swamped history despite its helpfulness, are now seen as beyond the pale by almost all Adventist historians.

Good religious histories will *report about* the supernatural, not *rely on* the supernatural for explanation, resting content with what can be empirically verified or implied, as history writing is a thoroughly human discipline. And as the human products they are, histories inevitably contain biases in tone and turn of phrase as well as selection of topics and sources, but arguably these can vary as widely among church historians as between those of faith and those without. Regardless, if a historical work deviates from canons of historical writing, it is only ethical for authors to be transparent about theoretical commitments.

The New Quest

Whereas the second quest's focus was the dismantling of a mythical Ellen White, the new quest is more about constructing the

to compare and contrast that image with what can be objectively established. He will also look at how that image has changed over time. Presently Graybill is revising his 1971 book *Mission to Black America: The True Story of Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star*, and he plans to republish it on Google Books. He isn't changing the text significantly but is adding an abundance of historic photographs.

- Terrie Aamodt is currently completing her biography of Ellen G. White, and Review and Herald Publishing Association is the anticipated publisher. Aamodt is portraying White as a human wife, mother, and leader whom admirers will find more relatable than the letter-perfect prophetic figure of tradition. This biography may have a greater impact on the denomination's view of its prophet than those published outside of the church, because more Adventists will read it and it will implicitly carry the denomination's imprimatur. Gerald Wheeler's biography *James White: Innovator and Overcomer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2003) raised the bar for denominationally published biographies, and if Aamodt can portray Ellen White to have been as human as Wheeler depicted James White, significant historiographical progress will have been achieved. Three other volumes in this series, edited by George Knight, will appear shortly: a biography of John Loughborough by Brian Strayer (Andrews University), a biography of Uriah Smith by the late Gary Land (Andrews University), and a biography of A.G. Daniells by Ben McArthur (Southern Adventist University).

- Jonathan M. Butler is working on a cultural biography of Ellen White that explores her prophetic authority in relationship to her gender and her Victorian period; this biography will also take seriously the various phases of White's womanhood. Butler's research is largely complete, and his writing is well underway. He has two essays in the just-published Oxford anthology, one of which introduces several of the themes to be developed in the biography. Butler co-edited, along with Ronald L. Numbers, *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987) and has written several significant essays on historic Adventism over the past 35 years.

- A Mormon scholar named David F. Holland recently joined the faculty at Harvard Divinity School as historian of North American religion. Holland's recently published book, *Sacred Borders, Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), includes a section on Ellen White, Ann Lee, and Joseph Smith, and he's now writing a dual biography of Mary Baker Eddy and Ellen G. White. Numbers is in contact with Holland and recently met with him and a group of Adventist historians in Washington D.C., in

conjunction with the contiguous national meetings of American religion historians and Adventist historians.

- Ron Numbers is under contract with Harvard University Press to write a book on J.H. Kellogg, and most of his research has been completed. In addition, for decades Numbers has been collecting information about his grandfather, former General Conference President W.H. Branson. He plans to incorporate that research into a book about his extended family and the Adventist movement, beginning with his great-grandfather Franklin Parker Branson, who greatly admired D.M. Canright. W.H. Branson's two children, Roy Branson's father and Numbers' mother, and their four children are included. Numbers plans to intersperse the family history with brief histories of the denomination, especially the role of the prophetess.

For many Adventists, the "historiographical revolution" among church historians is bad news; some of the miraculous proofs that preach so well and supply easy spiritual comfort are undercut. But for other Adventists, particularly those who bring the same analysis to their faith claims as to the rest of their lives, knowledge of the historical Ellen and related history provides a more authentic plank in their Adventist moorings. At Loma Linda University, where Numbers began a historiographical revolution and where in May he was analytically celebrated for his contribution to the denomination, the traditional Adventist notion of "wholism" is ensconced in the university's motto. In the sacred trinity of body, mind, and soul, the intellect has equality; and as a result of a more accurate picture of the church's prophet, the believer's Adventism can be more whole.

Jim Walters, PhD, is a co-founder of Adventist Today and a professor of religion at Loma Linda University. He directs his university's graduate program in bioethics and its humanities program.

¹ Apologies to the late Albert Schweitzer, whose most famous book was *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906).

² J.S. Washburn, "An Open Letter to Elder A. G. Daniells and an Appeal to the General Conference," 1922, p. 29.

³ Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher and Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520-1620* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

⁴ Roy Branson and Herold D. Weiss, "Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship," *Spectrum*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Autumn 1970.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book 1* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), pp. 20-21.

⁶ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), p. 336.

⁷ "The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia," *Andrews University Focus*, Vol. 50, No. 1, Winter 2014, p. 24.

⁸ <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199373864.do>

⁹ *ibid.*

ADVENTISM'S HISTORICAL REVOLUTION: NO DEFENSE NECESSARY

BY JONATHAN BUTLER

In 1969, the year I was starting graduate school in the Midwest, this guy I came to know later was just finishing his PhD on the West Coast. He was a promising, young, Seventh-day Adventist scholar who had done well in his graduate program and served as an elder in the Adventist church near the university. He came from a long line of Adventist ministers but elected to enter denominational teaching. He wrote a book review that year on George Shankel's *God and Man in History* that distanced him from the old guard of Adventist historians, such as Jerome Clark and Mervyn Maxwell, who mixed theology with history.

In his three-volume *1844*, Clark had concluded that the Millerite movement was “sustained of God”¹ and that evolution arose in the mid-19th century “because Satan feared the Advent movement and did not want its truths to be taught.”² Maxwell later wrote a denominational history titled *Tell It to the World*, in which he argued that Adventists could “tell it to the world” only after they had cleansed themselves of “all defilement” and had achieved a state of “perfection.”³ Both of these “historians” were writing meta-history in which they divined the hand of God at work, not the ordinary causes and effects for which they could supply evidence available to other historians.

An Adventist Historian

In 1970 Gary Land reviewed the third volume of the *1844* trilogy, and he said about Clark what he could have said about Maxwell too: his history reveals that he is “a committed and sincere Christian; one wishes that he had held the standards of historical scholarship as high.”⁴

The reviews of both Shankel's book and Clark's appeared in *Spectrum*, a new Adventist journal published primarily by and for Adventist graduate students and young professionals. The two young Turks who wrote them both began their teaching careers at Andrews University in the late 1960s, where the likes of Roy Branson, Herold Weiss, Donald McAdams, and William Peterson (along with Maxwell) also taught. In this period, I had completed my seminary training at Andrews and headed off to the University of Chicago Divinity School to study American church history. Both reviews meant a lot to me then, as did the

journal in which they were published.

The review of Shankel's book was titled “In Defense of Secular History.” It is remarkable to me now, however, for the way it takes seriously both the sacred and the profane in contemplating the writing of history. Shankel's reviewer argued that “the Christian interpretation of history is derived from revelation alone.” Because “revelation is strictly a matter of faith,” he, as a historian, should never “expect either to verify or to falsify [faith] with historical evidence.” Could he prove the miracle happened? No. But could he disprove it? He could not do that either. *Not as a historian*. In his Christian philosophy of history, there was “evidence of supernatural activity,” but the evidence was *revealed* in the Bible, not in the work of historians pawing through historical evidence.

When he entered the classroom at Andrews University as a brand-new history teacher, then, he thought of himself as a “Christian historian” who knew “by faith that God influences the affairs of men, just as the Christian scientist knows that God is controlling the operations of nature. But,” he insisted in the review, “God's hand is invisible, and we must not accuse the historian or the scientist of impiety when he cannot discern it. The teaching of secular history in Christian colleges is as defensible as the teaching of secular physics or physiology. The historian makes his contribution to Christian education not by teaching a peculiar history,” he concluded, “but by enabling students to learn in a Christian environment and by witnessing for Christ in and out of the classroom.”

I have been coy for a reason in not mentioning the name of this historian, who hoped to contribute “to Christian education” by creating “a Christian environment” for students and “by witnessing for Christ” on campus—*not* “by teaching a peculiar history.”⁵ Three short years after writing this, he would begin work on a book titled *Prophetess of Health*. My point is that in 1972, Ronald L. Numbers was far closer to the young man who arrived at Andrews University talking about how to be a “Christian historian” than he was to the secular professor who later wrote or edited more than two dozen books while teaching at the University of Wisconsin. It is important to be aware of this, I think, not only to understand properly the book he wrote on Ellen White and health reform, but also to appreciate fully the nature of Adventism's historiographical revolution, in which Numbers became so immersed in the 1970s and early 1980s. In his retrospective on this period for Adventist historians, Don McAdams, himself one of the revolutionary historians, understood that “the Ellen White scholars of the 1970s began their research as committed Adventists who fully accepted the authenticity of Ellen White's spiritual gift.”⁶

Numbers might look back on his personal transformation from the early Christian historian to the later secular one as a change for the better, analogous to “progressive revelation.” But it is important to remember that the Numbers of the early 1970s, like so many of his colleagues then, was a conflicted believer, not a nonbeliever. In this respect, the evangelical historian Ernest Sandeen had it right when he reviewed Numbers’ book and wrote, “When the historian and the believer are the same person, the writing of a book can become an enterprise fraught with tension and, occasionally, agony.”⁷ I would add here as well, whether or not Numbers himself would agree in retrospect, that the writing of *Prophetess of Health* was, in its own way, an important contribution to “Christian education” and to the “Christian environment” of students of the 1970s and the decades since.

A Secular Historian

Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet (Oxford University Press) should also become significant in the “Christian education” of students on Seventh-day Adventist campuses, where authors such as A.W. Spalding and C. Mervyn Maxwell, LeRoy Froom and F.D. Nichol are no longer read. This has everything to do with the profound change in those campuses and with the way Adventists have come to think of themselves and their past.

Grant Wacker, a Duke University professor of church history who wrote the preface for the Oxford volume, commented at the conference in Portland, Maine, in 2009, where the book began taking shape, that in the writing of any denomination’s history there is a watershed figure who marks the before-and-after in how its history is written. For Pentecostalism it is Robert Mapes Anderson, for Mormonism it is Richard Bushman, and for Seventh-day Adventism it is Ronald Numbers. I might protest slightly Wacker’s choice of Bushman for Mormonism, only because a good deal of sophisticated scholarship on Mormonism antedated him. But I heartily agree on Numbers for Adventism.

In the decades before *Prophetess of Health*, Seventh-day Adventist history consisted largely of memoirs, story books, and apologetics. Books on Adventist history and the “Spirit of Prophecy” were written by clergymen and taught in religion departments by one of the weaker academics on campus, trained in speech perhaps but a walking compendium of Ellen White quotations. Then a group of historians, with PhDs from secular universities, began to emerge and turn their attention to the Adventist past: Howard Weeks on evangelism, Richard Schwarz on John Harvey Kellogg, and, as a seminary student, Ronald Graybill on Ellen White and race. For critical historians to begin writing *Adventist* history was a big step. For them to focus

critically on *Ellen White* was a second, even bigger, step. That second step could only have been taken with the support of an academic *community* and with the existence of a journal such as *Spectrum*, which would publish their revisionist and often provocative findings.⁸ Numbers was not alone.

For Ellen White to become the object of critical scholarship represented a radical paradigm shift within Seventh-day Adventism. Even after the denomination began producing professional historians, Ellen White was avoided as “the weakest of the weak” with respect to a scholarly topic. Ironically, her spectacular displays of superhuman power frightened away historians whose training ill-equipped them for dealing with a religious figure who claimed divine intervention in her life. There was the little matter of job security, as well. Everything changed for me, however—and for the church as well—with Bill Peterson’s electrifying article on Ellen White and the French Revolution in the autumn of 1970.⁹ Then his friend Don McAdams followed with an unpublished study of John Huss, which one churchman would eventually describe as “10 times worse” than the Numbers book.¹⁰

In fact, [Ron] Numbers has had something to do with virtually every academic contribution on Adventist history that I have made.

I met Numbers for the first time in Loma Linda, where he regaled me with amazing factoids from his research on the prophetess as health reformer. Combining the dispassion of a historian and the exuberance of a man speaking in tongues, he chattered on about earthly physicians and dress reform, Sylvester Graham and vital force theory, and, of course, the “solitary vice.”

He would soon be hurled into outer darkness by the Ellen G. White Estate but embraced by Harper & Row; fired by Loma Linda University but hired by University of Wisconsin; *persona non grata* at the little Adventist church he hoped to attend in Madison but covered in *TIME* Magazine’s religion section.

Numbers had been an Adventist missionary kid who attended an Adventist academy near Bugg Hollow, Tennessee; not *in* it, only *near* it. He would rise from such humble and parochial origins to become a major player in the academic world. And, in a sense, he would take Ellen White with him. (I will not dally here to argue the ways in which his background served to encourage his success, not thwart it.) But before *Prophetess of*

Health, the female co-founder of Seventh-day Adventism was one of the best-kept secrets in American history. Joseph Smith, Ann Lee, and Mary Baker Eddy were widely known. Ellen White would have stumped the geniuses on the TV game show “Jeopardy!”

After Numbers’ book established itself, according to Martin E. Marty, as “the standard biography of Ellen White,”¹¹ the Adventist prophet rightfully took her place in the pantheon of America’s great female religious figures. Peter Williams ranked her, in prominence, with Anne Hutchinson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Baker Eddy, and Aimee Semple McPherson.¹² Paul K. Conkin included her with religious icons Eddy and Lee as one-third of “the great trinity of female prophets in American Christianity.”¹³

Because Numbers had “sold” Ellen White to non-Adventist academics, more Adventist historians took a long look at her as a legitimate topic of inquiry.¹⁴ And Adventist historians approached her just as they did any subject matter. However important she was in the spiritual lives of Adventists—or among the historians who wrote Adventist history—she had become a historical figure who invited historical analysis.

Though it would take a generation before Adventist publications would include Numbers in the footnotes, it was not lost on Adventist historians that Numbers was being cited favorably beyond the Adventist community. They saw too that this historian of science and medicine had launched a distinguished academic career by researching and writing on the prophet. And he continued to mine his background by publishing on religion and science, health reform and medicine, and more recently, the creationists and again Ellen White. He became the only scholar ever to be president of both the American Society of Church History (1999-2000) and the History of Science Society (2000-2001). He served for one term as president of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (2005-2009). And in 2008, he received the prestigious Sartan Medal for lifetime scholarly achievement from the History of Science Society.

Not bad for an Adventist missionary kid.

His Legacy

Adventist academics were the beneficiaries of his success, too. Privately, they consulted him on projects, and he advised and encouraged them. Publicly, Numbers provided breathing room for them to work. With an ignominious apostate like him as a foil, heretics could live to write another day. Upon reading a draft of my article “The World of E.G. White and the End of the World,”¹⁵ Arthur White, the prophet’s grandson, was not pleased, but he remarked, “You’re no Ron Numbers!” He meant this as a compliment.¹⁶

McAdams, too, had more space to maneuver because of Ron Numbers. Just as Graybill did because of Peterson or McAdams or Numbers. Or Fred Veltman did because of Walter Rea. It is that ever-moving crimson line between orthodoxy and heresy, or between, in King Lear’s phrase, “who’s in and who’s out.” What if, for example, there had been no Peterson or McAdams or Rea, and out of nowhere, Veltman had published his findings on *The Desire of Ages*? How long would he have kept his job or his ministerial credentials?

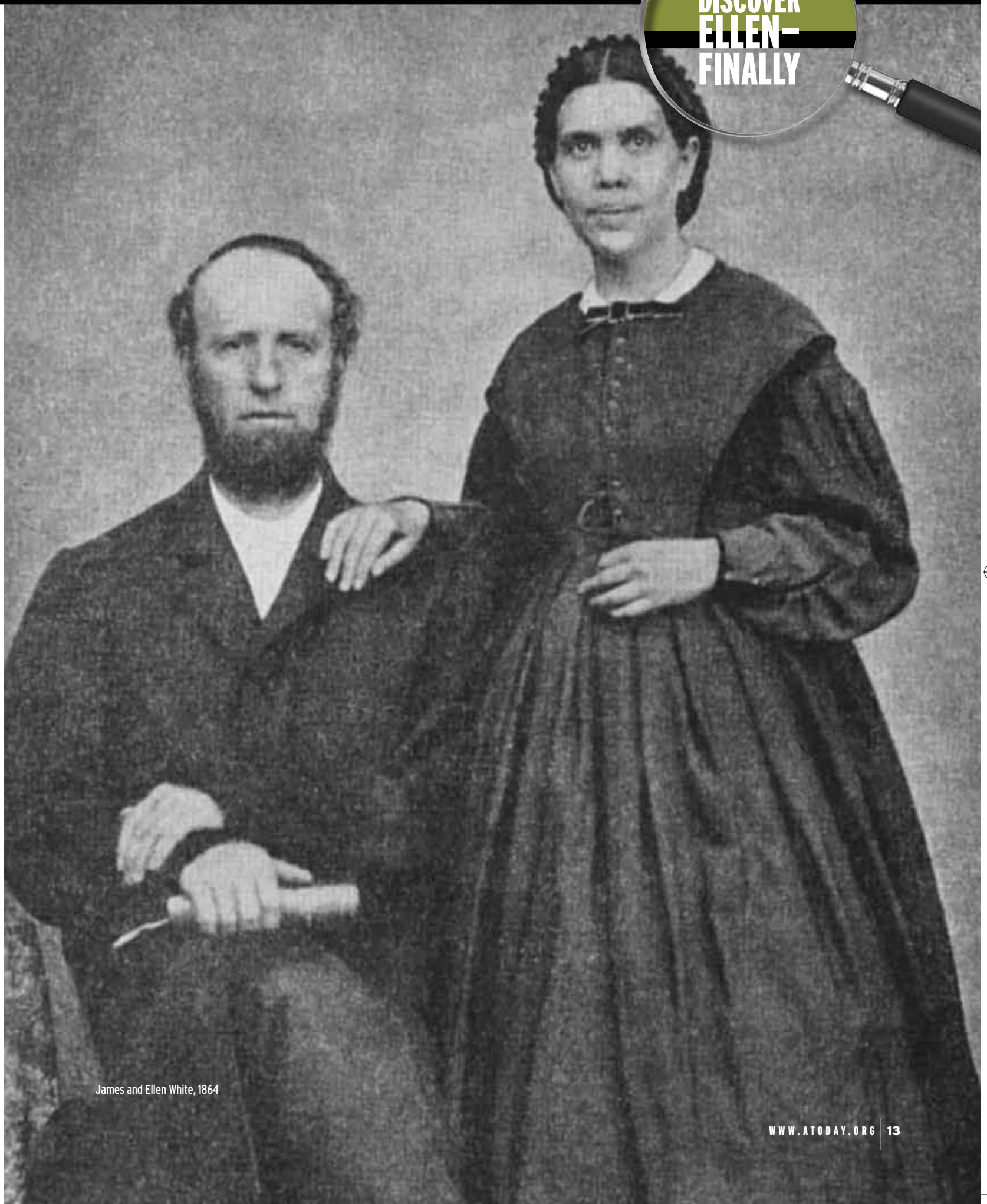
But since Adventism’s historiographical revolution of the 1970s and the publication of that watershed book *Prophetess of Health*, wherever the line is drawn *among historians* between orthodoxy and heresy, or “who’s in and who’s out,” it no longer can be drawn between *supernaturalists* and *naturalists*. In his preface to the book, Numbers listed Arthur White’s four presuppositions when approaching a study of the Adventist prophet: (1) that the Holy Spirit has led the Advent movement from its beginnings; (2) “that Ellen Harmon White was chosen of God as his messenger;” (3) “that as a sincere, dedicated Christian and a prophet, Ellen White would not and did not falsify;” and (4) that eyewitness accounts from Ellen White’s fellow believers “may be accepted as true and correct.” In 1976, when Numbers failed to embrace these presuppositions, it sent a chill down the Adventist spine. It was as if he had rejected the prophet’s inspiration and then had *proved* in his book that she was not inspired.¹⁷

But today, even the most conservative contributors to *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* would disagree with Arthur White that every historian must believe the first two points in order to write Adventist history (though they themselves accepted them as matters of faith) or that those points had been proven by the history they had written (they would consider that naïve and untenable). Those same conservative historians would also easily agree with Numbers that the last two points “are more properly conclusions than presuppositions.”

Did Ellen White ever shade the truth? Did John Loughborough ever record myth as though it were fact? All historians of Adventism would agree that they cannot answer these questions until they have done their work. But even Numbers had not ruled out reaching Arthur White’s last two conclusions once he had done his research.

The landscape has so changed for historians of Adventism and biographers of Ellen White that there is no longer an “Arthur White” making those four points or a “Ron Numbers” needing to answer them. In fact, the change was evident not just in the Numbers’ book, but also in its 124-page *Critique*.¹⁸ Although Numbers and the White Estate differed philosophically regarding the study of Ellen White, they quickly got down to writing

SCHOLARS
DISCOVER
ELLEN-
FINALLY



James and Ellen White, 1864

history the way any historian would write it. The quarrel between them involved questions such as why James White actually left his editorship of the *Review* in 1855, or whether Ellen White had read Larkin Coles before receiving her health reform vision, or whether she used phrenological language. These questions were debated by *both sides* as *naturalistic* history. In the literary studies of Peterson, McAdams, Graybill, Rea, and Veltman, what percentage of her writing was copied word for word, how much was closely or loosely paraphrased, and what part of it was creatively altered? Whatever the answers to these questions, they were arrived at by the painstaking application of a *naturalistic* historical method. And in case anyone is keeping track, Veltman found far less copying than Rea did, but he discovered far more copying than Numbers had.¹⁹

In a highly personal note: whenever I write Adventist history, I have felt the presence of an “angel” on each shoulder: Ron Numbers on one side and his cousin Roy Branson on the other side. Throughout their distinguished careers, the Harvard-trained Branson has pushed the church from within, and the Berkeley-bred Numbers has pulled it from without. When I am writing, I ask myself: “What would Branson think about this? And what would Numbers say about that?” If I can keep both of these “guardian angels” happy—which is not easy to do—it is very satisfying.

I wrote my first scholarly article on Adventist history—about the Chicago Mission—for a Branson class at the seminary and published it in *Spectrum*, which Branson edited for 23 years (1975–1998). I went on to write a slew of popular articles on Adventism and society with his worldview in mind. Branson inspired not just me, but Numbers too, in writing an article with Herold Weiss, in which they called for Adventists to do critical scholarship on Ellen White.²⁰ A few years later, Numbers answered that call. Over the years, Numbers has called me, too. In fact, Numbers has had something to do with virtually every academic contribution on Adventist history that I have made, from my chapter on “Adventism and the American Experience” (1974) to my two chapters in the Oxford volume (2014) and all of the work in between. I am never “disappointed” to see my name cited next to Numbers as co-editor of a collection of essays on Millerism.

In my writing of Adventist history, it has been helpful for me to have an “angel” on each shoulder. But however the writing gets done, with regard to Adventist history only one line should ever be drawn. And that line is not between *believing* and *non-believing* historians but between *good historians* and *bad ones*. In writing history or biography—including the biography of Ellen White—how much does the historian take the cultural context into account? How much development does the historian see, and how is this explained? Can even a prophet, however spiritually

motivated or high her sense of calling, be a flawed human being? Not just in principle but in fact, however pervasive or unpleasant the fact. By this measure, Terrie Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald Numbers, who edited *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, are *good historians*. And if I can say so, even though I contributed to it, their book is *good history*. It may never be sold in Adventist Book Centers, but it should be.

Church members would benefit enormously from reading it.

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¹ Jerome Clark, *1844*, Vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1968), p. 60.

² *ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 173.

³ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to the World* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1976), pp. 121, 263.

⁴ Gary Land, “Teaching History From an Adventist Perspective” (review of 1984 by Jerome L. Clark), *Spectrum*, Vol. 2, Summer 1970, p. 84.

⁵ Quotations from the Numbers review appear in his “In Defense of Secular History” (review of *God and Man in History* by George Shankel), *Spectrum*, Vol. 1, Spring 1969, pp. 64–68.

⁶ Donald R. McAdams, “Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 10, March 1980, p. 39.

⁷ Ernest R. Sandeen, “The State of a Church’s Soul,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 8, January 1977, pp. 15–16.

⁸ Gary Land, “From Apologetics to History: The Professionalization of Adventist Historians,” March 1980, pp. 89–100.

⁹ See William S. Peterson, “A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White’s Account of the French Revolution,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 2, Autumn 1970, pp. 57–69.

¹⁰ See Benjamin McArthur, “Point of the Spear: Adventist Liberalism and the Study of Ellen G. White,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 36, Spring 2008, pp. 45–56. Although, in compliance with the White Estate, McAdams never published two lengthy manuscripts on Ellen White and the English Reformation as well as John Huss, a summary and an analysis of his findings may be found in Eric Anderson, “Ellen White and Reformation Historians,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 9, July 1978, pp. 23–26.

¹¹ Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), p. 485.

¹² Williams, ed., *Perspectives on American Religion and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 289.

¹³ Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 127–142.

¹⁴ Numbers himself reviews the extensive literature referencing Ellen White after his book in *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. xix–xxi, notes 12–17.

¹⁵ Published in *Spectrum*, Vol. 10, August 1979, pp. 2–13.

¹⁶ This story is told in more detail by Jonathan Butler in “The Historian as Heretic,” *Prophetess of Health*, pp. 1–41.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. xxxii.

¹⁸ The Staff of the Ellen G. White Estate, *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976). See <http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/prophetess-of-health.pdf>

¹⁹ Following the first literary studies of the 1970s came Walter T. Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982). The church then commissioned Veltman’s response in “Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project (unpublished manuscript, November 1988); for an abstract of this work, see Veltman, “The Desire of Ages Project,” *Ministry*, October 1990, pp. 4–7.

²⁰ Roy Branson and Herold D. Weiss, “Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 2, Autumn 1970, pp. 30–33.

ELLEN WHITE: INSPIRER OF FAITH AND WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

BY JON PAULIEN

I was probably a strange child. By the time I was in college, I had not only read Uncle Arthur's *The Bible Story*¹ and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* through at least 10 times, but I had also read most of Ellen White's published works. My view of Ellen White was pretty traditional. I took it for granted that every written word came fairly directly from the throne of God and might as well have been written specifically for me. I had no sense that her work arose in a historical context and addressed specific situations that were often quite different from mine. I assumed that she was a bit superhuman and that she perfectly lived out the ideals that she expressed in her work.

I found Ellen White's writings more fresh and relevant to me than the Bible, which was clearly from another world, especially the Old Testament prophets. When I read her books, I often skipped over her lengthy quotes from the Bible, finding what she said *about* the Bible more interesting and useful than the Bible itself. As I measured myself against books such as *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, I felt very guilty, and this encouraged me to correct the shortcomings of others, perhaps in compensation. Although I read *Steps to Christ*, I did not enjoy it, as it did not seem of first importance compared to the real-life issues of diet, dress, and end-time events.

So when I entered the Seventh-day Adventist ministry in the spring of 1972, I would often take piles of books by Ellen White into the pulpit with me—sort of an early version of PowerPoint. I felt obligated to model my preaching on the often-sharp tone of her *Testimonies*. I meant very well, but I suspect I hurt some people and turned others away from both her writings and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As I travel the world today, I find many, many Seventh-day Adventists whose view and use of Ellen White is very similar to what mine was. My own experience helps me to be charitable with them. I know how easy it is to get hooked on such a picture of the prophetess. And for me, that early picture was a very important stage along the way, grounding me in principles that preserved me from alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and the debilitating consequences of sexual promiscuity. For all its shortcomings, a “sheltered life” is not the worst kind of life.

The First Wave of Ellen White Historians

I owe a great deal, however, to the many historians who began to open up the world of Ellen White in the mid-1970s. I'll never forget my surprise (and, at times, irritation) with Ron Numbers' book on Ellen White, *Prophetess of Health*. At the time it seemed pejorative and unfair, yet I read it with intense interest. I remember articles in *Spectrum* by Roy Branson, William Peterson, Jonathan Butler, and Donald McAdams. Later on there was the discovery of the notes from the 1919 Bible Conference. And then along came Robert Brinsmead, Walter Rae, and the issue of plagiarism. These encounters were followed in the 1980s by the early works of George Knight. It was quite a journey.

In the process I found my view of Ellen White shifting in what I consider a more balanced direction. Along with the Ellen G. White Estate, I came to understand that this enormous collection of writings was, in fact, rooted in history and needed to be interpreted as such. I learned that the Bible writers often made use of literary sources and assistants in their work, just as Ellen White did. I no longer believed that her writings were equal to Scripture or in place of it. I learned that to put the study of Scripture first actually honored her ministry and mission. I no longer used her as the primary basis of doctrine or of the meaning of Scripture. I learned how to present my faith from the Bible so that I could live and communicate in a world that had not yet met Ellen White. (For the White Estate view, see <http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/scripsda.html>.)

The Second Wave

But the historians were not done with me yet. On October 22-25, 2009, I attended the Ellen G. White Biography Conference in Portland, Maine, Ellen's childhood hometown. By my count there were 66 participants at the conference. About half of these (34) were Seventh-day Adventists who worked for the church or its institutions. These included such illustrious names as George Knight, Ron Graybill, Merlin Burt, Gil Valentine, Jud Lake, and Jerry Moon. Another 10 participants were Adventists in background but had either left the church or chosen employment outside the church. These included such well-known historians as Ron Numbers, Jonathan Butler, and Don McAdams.

The 22 non-Adventists² were almost a “Who's Who” of American religious studies, such as Ann Taves, then president-elect of the American Academy of Religion; Amanda Porterfield, co-editor of the journal *Church History*; Joan Hedrick, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of Harriet Beecher Stowe (a contemporary of Ellen White); and Grant Wacker, then president of the American Society of Church History. The better-known

institutions represented by these scholars included Harvard, Princeton, Duke, and Wisconsin. A very distinguished list. Never before had a group like this gotten together to study the life and work of Ellen White. The conference quickly became, in the words of a leading participant, “the most important conversation about Ellen White in 90 years.”

The participants brought two radically different worlds of study to the conference. On the one hand were the Adventists and “Adventist alumni,” who were as familiar with the life and writings of Ellen White as most people are with breathing. On the other hand, the non-Adventists at the conference were largely ignorant about her life and writings but instead embodied a vast and diverse expertise regarding the religious world of 19th-century America. The unspoken “elephant in the room” was that some of the attendees had written books and articles perceived as critical of the life, writings, claims, and motivations of Ellen White. Would her claims to inspiration become a point

Ellen White was a hugely important figure in her time, not just for the Seventh-day Adventist church, but also for a much wider audience.

of contention, splitting the attendees into warring camps that would set scholarly studies back for a generation? Conferences are not risk-free.

While leaving open the question of inspiration (which diverse scientific historians ought to do when discussing historical issues), the non-Adventist scholars present rapidly developed a great appreciation for the contributions of Ellen White within her time and place. Scholar after scholar stood up during discussion times and said, in effect, “I have never in my life attended a conference in which I learned as much as I have in this one.” The non-Adventists took home a treasure-trove of new knowledge, and they seemed universally enthusiastic about what they had learned. Many seemed determined to “put Ellen White on the map” of 19th-century religious leaders in America. They opined that she was probably the most prolific female religious writer in the country during a century that heralded such better-known rivals as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mary Baker Eddy. Furthermore, this woman with a third-grade education helped found a major denomination, the world’s largest Protestant educational system, and the world-renowned Loma Linda University Adventist Health Science Center.

For their part, the Adventists at the conference were amazed at the relevance of the vast historical knowledge that the non-Adventists brought to the subject. Time after time, non-Adventist respondents brought up individuals and historical trends that illuminated Ellen White’s writings and actions. Because the bodies of knowledge were so diverse, nearly every comment was an “aha” moment for somebody in the room. I, for one, was surprised and encouraged to see the admiration with which these great scholars addressed the hot issues in Ellen White interpretation. While triumphalism is never appropriate, Adventists do have a “treasure” that we have often been reluctant or embarrassed to share with others. Ellen White was a hugely important figure in her time, not just for the Seventh-day Adventist church, but also for a much wider audience.

The Challenge of Biography

The dynamic at the conference and in the resulting anthology from Oxford well illustrates the challenge of biography as a genre. In the case of Ellen White, the evidence of her life and writings is just too vast. It is the problem of selection. Which incident or statement tells who the person really is? Which is reflective of the “real” Ellen White: her carefully considered published comments, off-the-cuff statements she makes about herself, or reports in newspapers or writings about her? “Insiders” (Ellen White’s biggest fans) have a tendency to varnish the story. But to hide evidence of a person’s mistakes and to focus only on the bright side damages both author and subject when contrary evidence comes to light. “Outsiders,” on the other hand, tend to go to the other extreme, seeking to counter the excesses of the “insiders.” They can overplay evidences of the subject’s darker side and stretch the meaning of ambiguous evidence to make a point. Either way, it is a perilous thing for an ordinary writer to distort the character of someone who truly changed the world.

In the end, a biographer must decide which Ellen White to choose. He or she needs to evaluate, but not to judge, and to lay out the correspondence between a subject’s best intentions and actions. There needs to be a hermeneutic of charity, along with a fair and proper balance. The biographer needs to write as if Ellen White herself would read and respond to the work. In the words of Grant Wacker, “In the end, the writer needs to be able to look Ellen White in the eye.”

My Evaluation of the Oxford Book

While the new book on Ellen White from Oxford is not technically a biography, it is certainly a fascinating anthology regarding Ellen White’s life and writings. Opinions will differ as to how well this

book succeeds in achieving fair balance. On the whole, I think it does as well as anyone on either side could have hoped for. Some “insiders” and “outsiders” will no doubt react defensively. On my part, although the book as a whole seemed respectful, I was disappointed in the occasional word that betrayed an author’s slip from historical analysis to personal bias. For example, did Ellen White’s *Testimonies* really “betray” those who received them (p. 12)? Joshua Himes certainly declared later on that the Millerite calculations related to 1844 were wrong, but by saying that he “admitted” they were wrong, is the author’s personal judgment shining through (p. 38)? Was it necessary for one author to say that Ellen White followed a “discredited historicism approach” (p. 185)? Frankly, as someone who believes in and appreciates Ellen White’s inspiration, I found reading pages 185-190 downright distasteful. But these slip-ups are the exception rather than the rule.

I was truly amazed at the number of insights I gained into Ellen White’s life and ministry from this book. I learned that family life in the 19th century was typically much more extended than it is today, and that allowing others to help raise children, as Ellen White did, would not have been considered unusual.

I was very surprised how little weight the non-Adventist scholars allotted to charges of plagiarism. It was a different world back then, and many of Ellen White’s practices were more “normal” in that setting than we might think of them today.

I knew that Ellen White was a Methodist, but I didn’t know that she came out of a charismatic and experiential branch of Methodism, more like today’s Pentecostalism than today’s Methodism.

I also discovered that she was one of five young women in 1840s Portland who had visions and shared them.

I learned that Ellen White’s favorite editor and promoter was a non-SDA niece named Mary Clough!

I also found it helpful to confirm that Ellen White did not receive the order of the events in Jesus’ life in vision. She sought such information from Bible histories and dictionaries.

I was fascinated with the Adventist church’s transition in relation to her inspiration. At the beginning her gift was validated on the basis of ecstatic personal experience. In the latter part of her life, this played less and less of a role. Instead, her gift was validated on the basis of the more objective world of written prose.

The anthology also brought home to me that James White refused to publish his wife’s writings in *The Review and Herald* for four years because people had accused him of placing her writings above or equal to the Bible.

I was surprised to learn how deeply Christian Connection³ beliefs and practices impacted what the Adventist Church would become.

I was also surprised by how much attention Ellen White gave to social issues of her day, such as prohibition, militarism, poverty, religious liberty, slavery, and racism.

I did not know before that she and her husband published fictional stories in *Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle*, M.A. Vroman’s collection of stories and poems gathered from Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian church papers. Evidently when she spoke of “fiction” in a negative sense, she did not exclude the spiritual usefulness of some fictional accounts.

Expected Impact on Scholarship and Culture

I believe this book makes two huge contributions to scholarship on Ellen White:

First, most of us are accustomed to reading the Bible in its ancient context, as far as possible. But we tend to read Ellen White out of context, taking offhand “testimonies” to specific individuals and universalizing them in ways that can be confusing and unbalanced. Such reading makes it too easy for people to use her writings to promote personal agendas rather than her own more-balanced intention. The new Oxford book on Ellen White can help Adventists put her writings into their proper balance and context. Adventist readers can discover a fresh perspective leading to a new appreciation of what God did in her life. Rightly understood, she is as relevant today as she ever was.

Second, the Oxford book will “put Ellen White on the map” of non-SDA scholarship and culture. In the long run, it may do more to bring her to the attention of the wider world than anything Adventists themselves have been able to do, including our extensive mailings of *The Great Controversy*. This book will not please everyone. In fact, it may offend some readers on both sides of the controversial issues. But I leave you with a possible response to the book from Ellen White herself: “Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.”⁴

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¹ Written by Arthur S. Maxwell

² After some discussion as to what we should call the group of scholars not from the SDA tradition, they themselves preferred the simple moniker “non-Adventists.”

³ Christian Connection was a religious movement out of which came James White and Joseph Bates, co-founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

⁴ White, “Christ Our Hope,” *The Review and Herald*, Dec 20, 1892, par. 1. Reprinted in *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1946), p. 35.

WHAT WILL SCHOLARS DISCOVER?

BY TERRIE DOPP AAMODT

As we were planning the 2009 conference in Portland, Maine, to review eventual book chapters on Ellen White, I wondered what scholars who had not been nurtured in the Adventist world would think of her. They represented nearly half of the 67 participants at the conference. Some of the chapter respondents had never before heard of White and had been recruited for their knowledge of her larger contexts. Some were aware of her connection with the Millerites (who are known to academia almost exclusively because of *The Disappointed*, edited by Ronald Numbers and Jonathan Butler), and a good number were aware of her primarily because they were familiar with Ronald Numbers' *Prophetess of Health*, which appeared in 1976 and is now in its third edition. What would they think of her when they encountered the wider range of topics in our book? Two-thirds of the chapter authors were Adventist academics; the other third included some who had previous ties to the denomination and some who had not. What, for the respondents, would constitute valid studies of Ellen White?

Some clues emerged as the conference proceeded. It was interesting to watch the respondents decode Adventist patois; it is difficult to avoid lapsing into insider language even while trying not to. The respondents were appropriately unsparing when it happened. Participants were fascinated by Graeme Sharrock's recontextualizing of White's nine-volume series *Testimonies for the Church*. They quickly grasped the significance of Ellen White's role in building healthy congregations as Sharrock reconstructed the original structure of social webs and relationship networks that underlie the *Testimonies*. I wonder how their response might have differed if Sharrock's chapter had begun with the published *Testimonies* and moved forward to show their subsequent influence, as Adventist treatments have conventionally done. That, of course, is part of the story, but historians like to begin at the beginning.

They grilled Eric Anderson about the more difficult aspects of Ellen White's involvement in racial issues. They strove to understand the context of the Great Controversy narrative as it unfolded throughout various chapters, although time restraints precluded our doing justice to a topic whose theological and historical dimensions are so tightly woven. They told Ron Numbers they thought he had "mother" issues and asked him why he was so angry. They wanted to know more specifically about the extent of White's influence on Adventist education

and just what made it distinctive. They vigorously discussed her authorial practices, including plagiarism, but without the angst of Adventist internal conversations. They were very interested in the visions, both in the way they unfolded as actual events and in the way they were received. They concluded that investigating her story was an important task and that the details were complex enough and juicy enough to invite further research.

What will that research look like? It is too soon to tell, but not too soon to spot some likely trajectories.

Visions

Evidence of interest in this topic surfaced in Ann Taves' 1999 volume, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton). Her examinations of shouting Methodism, visionaries, and trance experiences are of particular interest to historical investigations of Ellen White. Scholars will want to know more about other believers in the Advent who were having visions in the 1840s: Hazen Foss, William Foy, Dorinda Baker, and Phoebe Knapp, among others. Jonathan Butler says they fell facedown into obscurity because they were not married to James White, which is likely true, more or less. But what else shaped their initial experiences and precipitated their march into oblivion? An underlying question, of course, is *What made Ellen White's experience different?* Whether or not an individual investigator would be inclined to credit the Holy Spirit for her uniqueness, its workings elude empirical investigation, which more appropriately examines human actions and motivations. While empirical data may not represent all of the story in the minds of some, they do provide common ground for all investigators.

Ellen Harmon White emerged from a visionary milieu. What happened to that milieu later in the century? What happened to White's visions? What accounts for the emergence of Anna Rice in the 1890s, when the visionary context of the 1840s was a distant cultural memory? What does her emergence tell us about Adventist expectations for visions? As Ellen White aged, some Adventists wondered whether another visionary would emerge after her death. How do those expectations in the 1910s differ from the context of the 1840s? These questions bear further investigation, and they will readily connect with examinations of White's function after the public visions ceased and the role of her visionary writings after her death.

Bodily Phenomena

The history of the human body is of significant and relatively recent interest to scholars in the humanities, and just this past

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Ellen White, 1899



year, that focus has landed on American religion in Robert C. Fuller's *The Body of Faith: A Biological History of Religion in America* (Chicago, 2013). Fuller notes that while postmodern scholarship has uncovered important material on minorities and other understudied groups, it has focused exclusively on language and culture and has therefore "fostered academic insularity by underestimating the relevance of what the sciences might contribute to social and cultural interpretation." He argues that since the body "is at the heart of all human thought and action," it must also reside "at the heart of both the descriptive and explanatory elements of historical narrative" (p. ix). Fuller, who at the 2009 Portland conference responded to Ann Taves' chapter on White's visions, identifies her as a figure of significant interest in his fourth chapter, where he examines relationships between the emotions and apocalyptic ideas. I expect that as further study

Investigations of the relationship between the human body and religion will eventually encompass Ellen White's emphasis on holism and health, as well as her embodied visionary experiences.

of the role of the body in American religious experience unfolds, we will see closer examinations of White that include forays into her primary documents. Furthermore, investigations of the relationship between the human body and religion will eventually encompass White's emphasis on holism and health, as well as her embodied visionary experiences.

Gender and Women's Issues

Interest in Adventists' stance on women's ordination will continue to pull readers from within and beyond the confines of Adventism into White's writings. That ground has already been covered fairly thoroughly, although more remains to be done to connect ideas from her personal correspondence to her published statements. In addition, a multitude of other topics invite more research: White's negotiation of private and public spheres when their boundaries seemed impermeable; her delineation of women's and men's roles within both spheres and, in fact, her hesitance to acknowledge that the spheres existed at all; her advice on homemaking,

child-rearing, and domestic practices in general; her advice and commentary on sexual matters; her treatment of domestic violence and mental cruelty; her attitudes on headship and how they might relate to discussions of ordination; her path toward acquiring a public voice; and her assertion of a role for women in public morals in areas such as temperance. A question about Ellen White's teachings and practices that could be applied to many areas is particularly relevant here: did her prophetic status make her an exception to general social and ecclesiastical expectations for women? And finally, did it take a woman to be a prophet in the 19th-century Adventist context? In other words, did maintaining a uniquely influential voice require that she be excluded from conventional (male) power structures?

Architect of Adventist Structures

Scholars have long paid lip service to this aspect of her life and ministry, but what does it mean, exactly? How does her unique status as a prophet affect the way she influenced Adventist educational, medical, and ecclesiastical structures? How did the reception of her visions affect fellow Adventists' acceptance of her visionary advice to think big thoughts, to take unconventional risks, and to build for the long term while in the midst of apocalyptic expectation? On her part, which was more visionary—seeing an imminent Advent, as she did throughout her long life, or preparing thoroughly for a delay?

A related area is White's role in politics. Conventional electoral politics, maybe, but infinitely more interesting is her role in ecclesiastical and institutional politics. Gilbert Valentine's *The Prophet and the Presidents* (Pacific Press, 2011) tackles an important area, but additional possibilities abound. How did her unique prophetic role affect her participation in church discussions apart from her dealings with General Conference presidents? What did she do behind the scenes? How does her private correspondence relate to her published stance on various issues? How were her political activities perceived by church leaders? By rank-and-file church members?

Textual Matters

For a multitude of analysts during these past few decades, textual study has involved creating parallel columns of Ellen White's writings and similar passages from other published works that she may or may not have acknowledged reading. Such activities will likely proceed as long as time lasts, but so many more textual matters invite investigation, especially with the digital tools we now command. How do significant threads of her thought weave their way through diaries, letters, published articles, scrapbook extracts,

and book manuscripts that have undergone multiple revisions? How does such analysis inform our understanding of her writing process? How does her vocabulary change and expand over time? Some claim that at age 17 she sprang fully formed from the head of William Miller and that her thought did not evolve in any significant way during her 70-year public career. Does the textual evidence bear this out? Such investigations, many of which might appeal to academics who have recently discovered Ellen White, might also spark some interesting conversations within Adventism: could an autodidact be as equally inspired as an automaton? The answer just might lie in the text(s).

Textual Editing Issues

Speaking of texts, just what is an authentic Ellen White text? Are the roles of editorial assistants who helped Ellen White transmute her handwritten manuscripts into published volumes identical with the roles of the countless individuals who have silently emended her handwritten, unpublished manuscripts? On the one hand, endless wordsmithing and careful editing of words intended for public consumption are *de rigueur* even for the most accomplished literary geniuses and—I do not say this lightly—deeply inspired authors. In this context, an editorial hand does not negate the genius or intimate inspiration of the author. On the other hand, unvarnished unpublished correspondence is valuable to the historical scholar to the degree that it authentically reflects the precise state of mind of the writer at a particular moment in time, as Ron Graybill presciently noted in his article “The Meaning of Misspelled Words: Scholars, Churchmen, and the Writings of Ellen White” (*Documentary Editing*, December 1991). Verbal tics, spelling errors, neologisms, contractions, insertions, deletions, and marginalia are vital tools in the cause of historical accuracy. A long time ago, when the Ellen G. White Estate could expect to maintain control over the published output of Ellen White’s words, it made perfect sense in that context to ensure that the typed transcriptions of her unpublished manuscripts exactly matched the edited, corrected excerpts that made their way into countless anthologies. Now what could be wrong with that, exactly? Not a lot, if the texts were intended for publication from the beginning. But these practices make a hash of biographers’ task of reconstructing as authentically as possible the inner workings of the mind of their subject. These practices will not hold up under scholarly scrutiny, nor should they. While it might be tempting or convenient to characterize scholars who grouse about these issues as unreasonable adversaries, on this issue the academics and the ecclesiastics should be singing in unison. Otherwise, no matter how trivial, well-intentioned, or rare these editorial changes might

be, they create the impression that someone might be hiding something. In that situation, nobody wins. The cost of preparing editions of her unpublished works that conform to standard editing practices would be money well spent. I am confident that in this matter the church has nothing to hide, and it would not be all that hard to prove me right.

Devotion

A prophet’s ultimate claim to authenticity deals not with what scholars or ecclesiastics do or do not do to the prophet. It has to do with how the prophet relates to the divine Source of inspiration. What are the prophet’s devotional practices? How does the prophet project that close connection with the divine in everyday activities? How does this intimacy translate into the prophet’s public proclamations? Ellen White’s documents are almost maddeningly numerous, but they thus provide rich opportunities to observe her personal spiritual insights and to observe how they flow into her dealings with others. Congregations, whether Adventist, Methodist, or otherwise, perceived spiritual power in her messages. Even a relatively passive view of inspiration requires two fully engaged parties. Prophets are singular, but they are also exemplars for fellow believers who possess ordinary levels of spiritual gifts. A full examination of White’s spiritual highs and lows as expressed in her personal writings instructs us both about her singularity and about the possibilities for connection with the divine that are open to any person of faith.

I fully expect that we will learn a lot as scholars from outside the Adventist fold turn more scrutiny on the life and times of Ellen White. Their perspectives will raise new questions and new angles of inquiry, and the possibility that someone “out there” might actually be paying attention to what Adventists say to each other about their collective history ought to raise the quality of our internal discourse. We have a lot to look forward to.

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ADVENTISM BACKS INTO THE FUTURE

BY THEODORE N. LEVTEROV

Ellen White's gift of prophecy has always been a subject of examination within and without the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Because of their nature, Ellen White's claims of prophetic revelations have brought waves of theological tension and controversies. And while each crisis has had its "negative consequences," there have been many constructive developments as Adventism has tried to clarify and explain its understanding and belief in modern manifestations of the prophetic gift. The result has been new "discoveries" (or "rediscoveries") of Ellen White and her prophetic role for the denomination, as the following examples will show.

First Ellen White Antagonists

The first wave of tension occurred in the early 1850s when the first offshoot from the Sabbatarians, the Messenger Party, arose mainly as a result of arguments over the validity of Ellen White's gift of prophecy. Although the controversy seemed to be initially personal in character, the objections rose to the level of a theological debate. The main question of contention was the relationship between the Bible and Ellen White's prophetic claims. The Messengers accused the Sabbatarians of having another rule of faith, the visions, in addition to the Bible, and they began to publish their views in the *Messenger of Truth*, the first specific periodical against Ellen White.¹ This first controversy forced the Sabbatarians to advance their initial theological argumentations in defense of Ellen White's prophetic claims and her relationship to the Bible in particular.

As early as 1851, James White authored an extensive article justifying the Sabbatarian belief in the gift of prophecy. He also explained the relationship between the Bible and the gifts, according to the Sabbatarians. He noted: "*The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. It is our rule of faith and practice. ... Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of*

the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in "all good works."

But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become weak, and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let him work"² (emphasis added).

The article was subsequently republished twice, in 1853 and 1854, after the Messenger challenges. To avoid further prejudice at that time, the Sabbatarians also avoided publicly promoting or giving prominence to Ellen White's visions in *The Review and Herald*, their main publication.

Adventism Develops a Stance on Prophecy

A second major wave of contention over Ellen White's prophetic gift occurred just after the official organization of the Sabbatarians into a denomination in 1863. B.F. Snook and W.H. Brinkerhoff became the first official Seventh-day Adventist ministers to leave the church over issues related to Ellen White. In 1866 they also published *The Visions of E.G. White Not of God*, the first booklet questioning the validity of her prophetic claims.³ The main critical questions centered again over nuances of the relationship between Ellen White's gift and the Bible, particularly over the issue of suppression of some of her earlier writings. Non-Seventh-day Adventists such as William Sheldon and Miles Grant also entered the debate and viewed the newly formed denomination as being another cult led by a self-proclaimed prophet.

The new critical observations led Seventh-day Adventists to further develop their understanding of the gift of prophecy. They continued to hold to their original position that there was a distinction between the Bible and Ellen White's writings and that the two did not stand on equal ground. Concerning the "suppression" question, Seventh-day Adventists admitted that parts of Ellen White's earlier writings were not republished, but that this was done for practical and stylistic reasons rather than avoidance of doctrinal inconsistencies, as the critics claimed. The Adventists also made a special effort to distinguish Ellen White from contemporary false prophets.

The most significant controversy over Ellen White's prophetic gift, however, came during the 1880s when D.M. Canright, a prominent Adventist minister and a personal friend of the Whites, left the church and published the book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*.⁴ The book summarized all of the previously raised objections against her gift and became the main "textbook" of all future opposition to Ellen White and Seventh-day Adventism in general. Canright also introduced a

new charge: that of plagiarism in her writings. He accused Ellen White of copying “whole sentences, paragraphs and even pages, word for word, from other authors” without giving any “credit” or “sign of quotation.”⁵

Word Versus Thought Inspiration

These new objections prompted Seventh-day Adventists to clarify their view on inspiration and its meaning in relation to Ellen White’s writings. It became clear that while the critics based their arguments on “dictational” or “word” inspiration, Seventh-day Adventists, including Ellen White herself, based their answers on a “thought” or “dynamic” view of inspiration. Consequently, Adventists affirmed that making changes for grammatical or stylistic reasons or omitting parts of Ellen White’s earlier publications did not invalidate her divine inspiration. At the same time, they failed to respond to the “plagiarism” charge. This may be a reason why the issue would appear again.

Unfortunately, during the early years of the 20th century, Seventh-day Adventists, together with other conservative Protestants, were “pushed” into a more rigid view on inspiration because of the fundamentalist-liberal controversy. Even the 1919 Bible Conference that took place in the midst of that debate did not help the denomination, and by the 1920s Adventism lost its balanced view on the topic. The results of accepting a fundamentalist position on inspiration led to the fostering of false ideas related to Ellen White and her writings. This historical reality brought new waves of controversy related to Ellen White’s prophetic ministry during the 20th century, which crested in the 1970s and 1980s.

Shattering Long-Established Myths

The new wave of challenges began with the publication of Ronald Numbers’ *Prophetess of Health* in 1976, Walter Rea’s *The White Lie* in 1982, and a series of *Spectrum* articles. These works confronted what had become the “settled understanding” of Ellen White since the 1920s. The challenges came as a shock to a generation of Adventists that were versed on certain myths about her prophetic role. Numbers’ work showed that Ellen White was influenced by the 19th-century reality regarding many of her writings on health. Furthermore, she was in line with many of the reformed health principles that began to emerge at that time. Rea’s book challenged Ellen White’s borrowing for her writings as being much more extensive than previously acknowledged. The charge of plagiarism was resurrected. But how would the church respond to the new challenges?

In reality, though, the events of the 1970s and 1980s brought nothing new or extraordinary, except to thrust Adventism

back to its initial understanding of Ellen White and her divine inspiration. For the new generation of Adventists, however, the challenges were “new” and “real.” The stage was set for fresh discoveries (or rather rediscoveries) of the real Ellen White. Thus the latest crisis “aided” the denomination on several fronts.

First, Seventh-day Adventism began to develop its own Adventist scholars who took seriously, and responsibly, the academic task of examining Ellen White and Adventist history. In the early 1980s the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary began a Ph.D. program with a new emphasis on Adventist Studies. Around the same time, George R. Knight, whose professional training was in education, began to develop scholars in Adventism through the religious educational program in the School of Education at Andrews University. Interestingly, Gil Valentine, who studied under Knight and wrote his doctoral thesis on W.W. Prescott, became the first doctoral graduate from any school at Andrews University in 1982.⁶ Allan Lindsay and Arnold Reye joined Valentine and other emerging scholars in Adventism who studied under professor Knight. Ronald Graybill also completed his doctoral work titled “The Power of

The results of accepting a fundamentalist position on inspiration led to the fostering of false ideas related to Ellen White and her writings.

Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century” at John Hopkins University in 1983. A few years earlier at the University of Birmingham, Roy Graham wrote his thesis specifically on Ellen White and her position in the Seventh-day Adventist church.⁷ One of Graham’s purposes was to explain Ellen White to non-Adventist scholars and readers. Although his work did not cover the positive and negative publications of the late 1970s and 1980s, it left few stones unturned with regard to issues in Ellen White.

The trend of scholarly “discoveries” continued into the 1990s and 2000s with new studies on various Adventist topics. Andrew G. Mustard, for example, examined James White’s role in the development of Seventh-day Adventist organization from 1844-1881.⁸ Jerry Moon focused his research on William Clarence White and his relationship to his mother.⁹ Rolf J. Pohler

studied the development and changes in Seventh-day Adventist theology.¹⁰ More recent Adventist scholarship includes that of Alberto Timm, Merlin Burt, Julius Num, and Michael Campbell, to mention a few. My own research on the development of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding on Ellen White's prophetic gift is also a part of this line of scholarly works.¹¹ The majority of the new studies have taken the historical descriptive approach instead of the apologetic genre. The result has been a better and healthier understanding of Ellen White and Adventist history within its proper context of 19th-century American religion.

Seeing Ellen White in a New Light

A second development has been the new type of Adventist published works. Beginning with George Knight's *Myths in Adventism* (1985), the stage was set for publications that treated the topic of Ellen White and Adventist history in a more unbiased and balanced way. Knight, in particular, became the most prolific author, writing extensively on almost every aspect of Adventist history and challenging the traditionally accepted views on Ellen White and Adventism in general. He also initiated an Adventist biography series: volumes treating the life and contributions of important Adventist leaders. As I am writing this essay, Terrie Aamodt, a professor of history and English at Walla Walla University, is working on a new biography of Ellen White as a part of that series. Other Seventh-day Adventist authors such as Herbert Douglas, Gary Land, Gilbert Valentine, Douglas Morgan, James Nix, and Jud Lake, to mention a few, have also written insightful books on Adventism and Ellen White.

A major significant publication related to Ellen White that has just been released is *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, edited by Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon.¹² Having taken more than 10 years to complete, the 1,465-page volume brings together hundreds of articles describing events and people connected to the life and work of Ellen White, as well as her stand on numerous issues. A new book edited by Merlin Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, will also be published later this year.

The implication of these types of published works is extremely significant, as they are able to reach a wider Adventist audience and not just the scholarly community. Consequently, these new publications have been a vehicle of change for the theology of the "pew." I am not claiming that this has been always the case, but at least many Adventists have experienced exciting discoveries by seeing Ellen White and Adventism in a new light. My personal views on many issues, for example, were changed after reading several of Knight's books in the late 1990s.

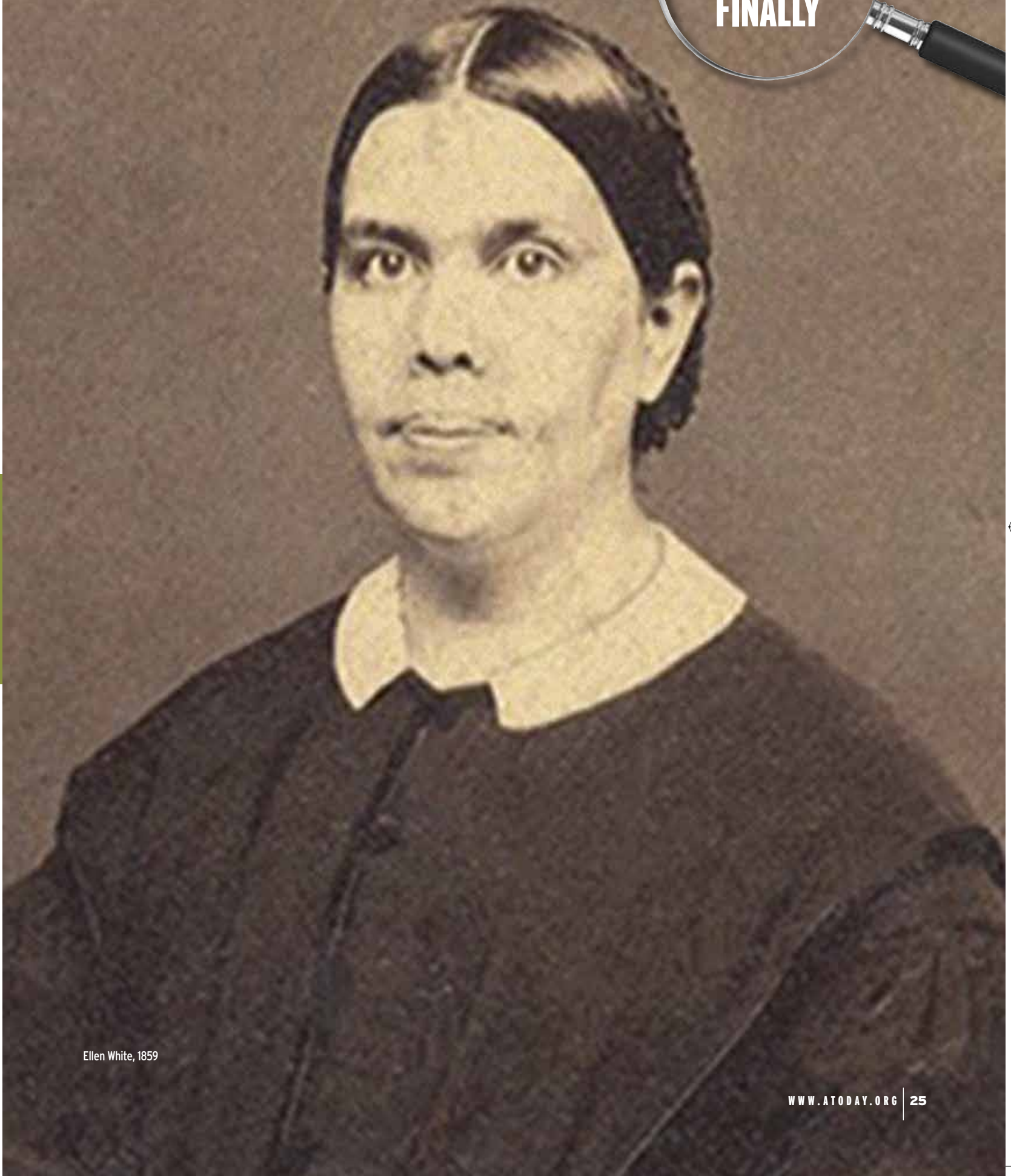
A third development has been the change of attitude and

policies of the Ellen G. White Estate organization itself. While its main purpose remains to promote the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, the events of the 1970s and 1980s moved the Estate to gradually adapt and change its earlier and more restrictive access policies, especially that of using unpublished documents, in order to accommodate the increasing need for scholarly research. A major example of that adjustment is the recent decision of the White Estate board to provide free online access to all of Ellen White's unpublished letters and manuscripts in 2015. In conjunction with that decision is publication of the first volume of *Ellen G. White: Letters and Manuscripts with Annotations* covering the years from 1845 to 1859, which had a projected release date in the spring of 2014. The annotation notes will provide information aimed to help people understand the context of Ellen White's unpublished writings. The second volume covering the years up to 1863 is expected to be published in 2015.

It became obvious that the church had failed to present Ellen White to the outside world. Rather, she was mostly known "in-house."

A fourth development has been the prospect of establishing relationships between Adventist and non-Adventist historians (and scholars) interested in 19th-century American Christianity. The new book on Ellen White just published by Oxford University press, *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*,¹³ is a contemporaneous fruit of such a link. It comes as a result of a conference that took place in October 2009 in Portland, Maine, which brought together notable Adventist, ex-Adventist, and non-Adventist scholars. (The contributors to the volume represent all of the three groups, and this should give a nice blend of perspectives).¹⁴ I personally was encouraged to see the very positive tone of discussions during the three-day event. What surprised me most was the interest shown toward Ellen White as a religious figure by those who did not come from the Adventist tradition. Many of them had only scarce information concerning her life and legacy. It became obvious that the church had failed to present Ellen White to the outside world. Rather, she was mostly known "in-house."

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Ellen White, 1859

Such scholarly interactions, therefore, should continue. It is through such events that Adventism can promote and establish Ellen White's legacy among the significant leaders of 19th-century American Christianity, a place where she really belongs. Regardless if one agrees or disagrees with Ellen White's prophetic claims, she is without a doubt a major figure of the American Christian tradition who will continue to be studied, discovered, and rediscovered.

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¹ Three extant issues of this periodical can be found in the State Library of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, PA): Oct. 19, Nov. 2, and Nov. 30, 1854.

² James White, "The Gifts of the Gospel Church," *Review and Herald*, Apr. 21, 1851, p. 70.

³ B.F. Snook and William H. Brinkerhoff, *The Visions of E.G. White, Not of God* (Cedar Rapids, OH: Cedar Valley Times Book and Job Print, 1866).

⁴ D.M. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced: After an Experience of Twenty-Eight Years by a Prominent Minister and Writer of That Faith* (Kalamazoo, MI: Kalamazoo Publishing Co., 1888). The book was enlarged and republished in 1889. By 1914 the book had gone through 14 reprints.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶ Gilbert M. Valentine, "William Warren Prescott, Seventh-day Adventist Educator" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1982).

⁷ Roy E. Graham, "Ellen G. White: Co-Founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1977).

⁸ Andrew G. Mustard, "James White and the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Organization, 1844-1881" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1987).

⁹ Jerry A. Moon, "W.C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1993).

¹⁰ Rolf J. Pohler, "Change in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995).

¹¹ Theodore N. Levterov, "The Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of Ellen G. White's Prophetic Gift, 1844-1889" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2011).

¹² Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds., *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014).

¹³ Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁴ Since the book was still at press as I was writing this essay, I could not evaluate its merits further.

THE ONCE AND FUTURE ELLEN WHITE

BY RONALD L. NUMBERS

Thirty-eight years ago I was asked to leave Loma Linda University (LLU) because of what I had written about Ellen White. Now I have been invited back to talk about her. I was run out of town 40 years ago for writing *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*; I have been welcomed back at least in part to help celebrate the publication of *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, a project in which I was privileged to participate. With respect to the university's invitation, I deeply appreciate the gesture. And I think we can all be grateful that times have changed (even if it has cost me a head of hair).

I'm very touched by most of what's been written, though I remain confused by my public identity, to say nothing of my self-identity. When *Prophetess of Health* appeared 38 years ago, Loma Linda University asked me to find employment elsewhere and the Ellen G. White Estate damned me as a heretic. Yet the reviewer of the book for the *Journal of American History* checked with me before submitting his review to make sure that I had indeed written a church-authorized account. My positive treatment of the prophet, especially of her visions, had convinced him that it was.

Other early reactions to *Prophetess of Health* also baffled me. One pastor in Southern California exposed me on two consecutive Sabbaths. His jeremiad culminated with a truly distasteful image of me "streaking" across the campus of Southern Missionary College, thus illustrating "the character of the young man who wrote this book." Not only was streaking years in the future, but anyone who knows me knows that I would be the last man on campus to exhibit my scarred body.

Back then I didn't even know whom to trust. For a period my friend Ron Graybill, then on the staff of the Ellen G. White Estate, kept me abreast of activities there. On one occasion he told me in confidence that the White Estate staff had recently discovered a letter by Ellen White describing Dr. James Caleb Jackson's positive phrenological readings of her sons' heads. This discovery prompted Arthur L. White to express the hope that Ron Numbers never saw the letter. Confident that Elder White would not lie to me, I some time later inquired in general about the existence of any documents relating to Ellen White's attitude toward phrenology. Both he and Paul Gordon denied that there were. Perhaps a year later Graybill called to let me know that

the White Estate was collaborating with René Noorbergen, biographer of the psychic Jeane Dixon and contributor to the *National Enquirer*, to entrap me using some kind of lie detector. In due time Noorbergen called, but being forewarned, I stonewalled. He reported back to the White Estate that I hadn't been willing to answer his queries. In view of this background, you can imagine my shock on hearing (via tape) Ron Graybill exposing me in a lecture at Loma Linda as "a wildly irresponsible historian." Back in those days Ron was a big risk-taker, fully aware that I was the only one at the time standing between him and termination from the White Estate. (We've since repaired our friendship.)

My perplexity continues down to the present. In the spring of 2013 the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians, meeting at Union College, invited me to give the keynote address, which I happily did. I couldn't have been treated better. Then earlier this year, while waiting to do some research at the General Conference (GC) Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, I took in a one-day conference at the GC on "Adventism and Adventist History: Sesquicentennial Reflections." To my surprise, two papers in the introductory session on "Historiography" mentioned me. One of the speakers, Nicholas Miller, a church historian at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, passed out a chart identifying five different "Philosophical Approaches to History." The first column, labeled "Closed Secular Confessional," carried the following description: "Critical, materialistic, positivistic; no allowance for non-material causes or transcendent categories; religion as an epiphenomena [sic] of other human experiences and motives." Okay, I thought, I know there are some materialistic and positivistic historians; but to my shock the only two histories given as examples were Fawn M. Brodie's *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* and my own *Prophetess of Health*—along with the gratuitous comment "anything by Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens," two notorious skeptics (and nonhistorians). Miller apparently believes (and has said so in public) that failure to invoke the supernatural is the methodological equivalent of denying the supernatural. I find such reasoning quirky at best. Thankfully, he seems to represent a minority viewpoint even among Adventist historians.

It seems only fitting that the LLU School of Religion is sponsoring a symposium about scholarly interest in Ellen White. After all, it was an instructor in that program, Vern Carner, who talked me into writing *Prophetess of Health* and who served as my agent with Harper & Row. And according to numerous rumors it was A. Graham Maxwell, then director of the LLU Division of Religion, who underwrote my research with a personal gift of

\$20,000. Later I learned that Maxwell had withdrawn the funds from the credit union to purchase some property, not to subsidize me. This made sense, since we barely knew each other, and he and I never spoke about my research. (He did, however, meet with General Conference officials to discuss how to deal with what some called the "Numbers problem.")

The four essays that precede this reply fall mostly into a neat pattern of past, present, and future. I will take them up in that order.

The Past: I should confess that for decades Jonathan Butler has been my favorite historian of Adventism, though for years he has whined and wept about being listed (out of alphabetical order) as co-editor of *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*. Despite his denial, he is definitely

Historians of religion have discovered so many instances of prophets copying and denying doing so (think Joseph Smith and Mary Baker Eddy) that it's no longer shocking.

disappointed. Although no one in the Adventist community comes close to him in terms of insight and style, I can understand why some find his writing "distasteful." In the initial draft of his biographical contribution to *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, only editorial good taste—specifically Terrie Aamodt's—prevented the publication of Jon's disgusting description of Ellen White as a "pie-faced prophet." As embarrassing as some of his revelations are, most of them, probably all of them, are true. And, as always, I believe in telling the truth. My only regret is that in writing about the necessary support of a "community," Butler neglects to mention the critical role played by my dear friend and former LLU colleague Vern Carner, not only in encouraging my research but in helping to awaken scholarly interest in Millerite and Adventist studies.

The Present: Unlike Butler, who focused on the past, Jon Paulien looks at the recent past and present (except for his fascinating biographical insights). I had heard about Paulien over the years, but I did not meet him face to face until the now-notable Portland conference in 2009. I expected a dour old-school Adventist theologian who would not look favorably on what was taking place. Instead, to my surprise, I discovered

a genial, (fairly) open-minded, enthusiastic participant who in no way matched my stereotype. It was the presence of such courageous Adventist scholars, as much as the attendance of our non-Adventist friends, that made the get-together “the most important conversation about Ellen White in 90 years.” I am thrilled that he finds *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, despite some understandable reservations, as good “as anyone on either side could hope.” Speaking as a co-editor, I can only say that we tried our best to be fair and balanced. I am also pleased that he approves of our effort to contextualize Ellen White’s life and work and to put her “on the map” of American religious history. With regard to Paulien’s surprise at discovering “how little weight the non-Adventist scholars allotted to charges of plagiarism,” I would offer a slightly different interpretation: Historians of religion have discovered so many instances of prophets copying and denying doing so (think Joseph Smith and Mary Baker Eddy) that it’s no longer shocking.

To make the paradigm shift truly radical, Adventist historians will need to adopt what some sociologists refer to as the “symmetry principle.” According to this criterion, scholars should use the same types of explanations for science and pseudoscience, for dogma and heresy, and for Ellen White and her critics.

The Future: I was tempted to label this section “The Historian as Prophet” because Terrie Dopp Aamodt, an excellent historian (and, I discovered, a skilled and ruthless editor), in her article forsakes her expertise in interpreting the past to predict the future. (At Walla Walla University she’s a faculty member in what was once actually called the Department of History and Prophecy.) Initially that struck me as being a little foolish, and anyone who knows Terrie knows that she not foolish (except about baseball). Then I experienced an epiphany: She’s not really predicting what other scholars might write about White

but graciously sharing with us what she’s putting into her forthcoming biography of Ellen White for the Adventist Pioneers Series, to be edited by George Knight and published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Given the current state of Ellen White scholarship, I am eager to glean any hints about what she will say regarding the visions of White and those of her contemporaries. From what she tells us, I expect her to treat White’s visions respectfully but to refrain from invoking the Holy Spirit, the workings of which, she writes, “elude empirical investigation.” I think she will be inspired by Robert C. Fuller’s recent *The Body of Faith: A Biological History of Religion in America*, which devotes a number of pages to Ellen White and her Adventist followers, to explore more deeply than anyone yet has White’s views on the body as well as how her own body may have affected her views. Drawing on the work of Laura Vance, Ron Graybill, and others, Aamodt will surely reveal more than we now know about White’s role as a woman: a wife, a mother, a prophet. (Guess which of the editors of *Ellen Harmon White* pushed the hardest to highlight her maiden name as opposed to her authorial name.) She will also likely delve into White’s political activities and her efforts to raise a denomination.

The most critical—and undoubtedly controversial—of her predictions appears in the section titled “textual matters.” It’s worth noting that Aamodt is not only a professor of history but also of English. She cares deeply about texts and how they illuminate a writer’s thoughts and practices. She speculates that a closer look at White’s texts might “spark some interesting conversations within Adventism,” asking provocatively “could an autodidact be as equally inspired as an automaton?” But to carry out this work, she and other White scholars must have access to White’s original drafts.

Theodore N. Levterov, an employee of the Ellen G. White Estate, celebrates his employer’s increasingly open policy toward researchers, especially “the recent decision of the White Estate board to provide free online access to all of Ellen White’s unpublished letters and manuscripts.” What he does not tell us—and what concerns Aamodt and should concern all serious scholars—is that the estate is not publishing her autograph or holograph letters and manuscripts but typed and edited transcriptions of them, ignoring, as Aamodt points out, the value of “unvarnished unpublished correspondence” to scholars. “These practices,” writes Aamodt, “will not hold up under scholarly scrutiny, nor should they.” The appearance of these edited sources is scholarly tragedy, not a cause for celebration.

Aamodt concludes with the hope that “we will learn a lot as scholars from outside the Adventist fold turn more scrutiny on the life and time of Ellen White.” I share her optimism. In



Ellen White, 1878

producing *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, we learned much from the contributions of non-Adventists Ann Taves and Laura Vance. Since the conference, as noted above, Robert C. Fuller's *The Body of Faith* has appeared, as has David F. Holland's *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*, which examines White's extrabiblical revelations. Holland, recently appointed associate professor of North American Religious History on the Harvard Divinity School faculty, is currently writing a comparative biography of Mary Baker Eddy and Ellen White. This should be interesting!

Levterov's essay, I am sorry to say, reflects yesterday's historiography. Beginning with the "Messenger Party" controversies about White in the 1850s, he moves on to the debates in the 1860s instigated by the questioning of Snook and Brinkerhoff, and then on to later efforts "to distinguish Ellen White from contemporary false prophets." Dudley M. Canright, Ronald L. Numbers, and Walter Rea all make appearances as "challengers" to White. A turning point, he tells us, came in the early 1980s when George R. Knight, Levterov's dissertation adviser, began training Adventist scholars in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Levterov observes that "the majority of the new studies [directed or inspired by Knight] have taken the historical descriptive

approach instead of the apologetic genre." One could only wish. Most of the dissertations, including Levterov's own, have adopted what might be called Knight's soft apologetical style. Few, if any, meet the standards of the best graduate programs in history. *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, for which Knight served as consulting editor and which was co-edited by one of his former students, strikingly reflects the same school of Adventist historiography.

We may be witnessing what Butler calls "a radical paradigm shift" within Ellen White and Adventist studies, but we still see lots of what Thomas Kuhn termed "normal science." Most Adventist historians, with the notable exception of Nicholas Miller, no longer appeal in public to divine or Satanic influences, though a number of them no doubt continue to believe in them privately. But to make the paradigm shift truly radical, Adventist historians will need to adopt what some sociologists refer to as the "symmetry principle." According to this criterion, scholars should use the same types of explanations for science and pseudoscience, for dogma and heresy, and for Ellen White and her critics. (As David Bloor notes in the afterword to the second edition of his influential *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1991, the symmetry principle originated not with science studies but with biblical studies, especially at the University of Tübingen, where F.C. Baur promoted the method in the first half of the 19th century.) The closest I've seen to such symmetry in a work published by the denomination is *Seeker After Light: A.F. Ballenger, Adventism, and American Christianity*, by Calvin W. Edwards and Gary Land (Andrews University Press, 2000), which could serve as a model for future studies.

With the publication of *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, I think the study of Mrs. White has taken a long stride forward. But then I would think that, wouldn't it? Whatever the circumstances, it's nice to be back. Perhaps Thomas Wolfe was wrong when he wrote, "You Can't Go Home Again." We'll see.

Ronald L. Numbers, PhD, is Hilldale and William Coleman Professor of the History of Science and Medicine Emeritus for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was awarded the 2008 George Sarton Medal by the History of Science Society for "a lifetime of exceptional scholarly achievement by a distinguished scholar" and has served as president of that society. Numbers is also a distinguished scholar of American religious history, having served as president of the American Society of Church History. His particular focus is Adventist history: Prophetess of Health (3 editions) and The Creationists (2 versions).



On Leaving Good Things Out

By Alden Thompson

We don't
have to say
everything
every time
we put pen to
paper. Indeed,
we will leave
out all kinds
of good things
to make our
point clear.

As an aging, media-challenged Adventist, I'm not the one to critique the efforts of my brothers and sisters who seek fresh ways to use the media in sharing their faith. But I do know something about the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. So when I saw the published BRI critique of *The Record Keeper*, I took note. The critics said the "crucially important message that 'God is love' hardly appears." Where might such a path lead?

The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, released this year, gets us started. The article titled "The Theology of Ellen G. White" by Denis Fortin, one of the editors, includes this intriguing comment: "Her first book on the great controversy—the first volume of *Spiritual Gifts*—does not even once mention that 'God is love.' And the two-page description of the 'law of love' which opens the Conflict of the Ages Series in *Patriarchs and Prophets* (pp. 34, 35) finds no parallel in either of her earlier writings in *Spiritual Gifts* (vol. 1) or *The Spirit of Prophecy* (vol. 1)."

So should we dump *Spiritual Gifts* (1858) and *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1870), keeping only *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890)? I hope not! We don't have to say everything every time we put pen to paper. Indeed, we will leave out all kinds of good things to make our point clear.

In 1905 Ellen White addressed the issue with this reference: "And in the *Signs of the Times* let not the articles be long or the print fine. Do not try to crowd everything into one number of the paper."¹ In short, every meal doesn't have to be a full meal. And in her astonishing counsel about Bible teachers, she argued for variety because that's what we find in Scripture. "Why do we need a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, a John, a Paul...?" she asks. "It is because the minds of men differ."² As for speakers: "One dwells at considerable length on points that others would pass by quickly or not mention at all."³

So should we dump those who don't tell it all? Far from it! "The whole truth is presented more clearly by several than by one." In that respect, *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* sets a wonderful example.

The short, unsigned articles are by the editors, and we know who they are: Denis Fortin, Jerry Moon, and Michael Campbell. Everyone else has a byline. The church is defined when devout Adventists write articles and books and sign their names. We can sing in harmony, not just in unison.

But now let's apply the "full message" method to Scripture. The book of James says nothing about the cross or the death of Christ. Dump him. The Gospel of John never once mentions repentance. Dump him. Ecclesiastes never mentions prayer or praise; Esther never mentions God. Dump 'em. Let's go even further and dump all those Old Testament books that do not identify Satan as God's great opponent. That leaves only Job, 1 Chronicles, and Zechariah. Shall we dump all the rest?

Should we dump Genesis because it doesn't identify the serpent as Satan, but only as a being "more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made" (Gen. 3:1, NRSV)? And what about the "contradiction" between the two stories of David's census: Was it God (2 Sam. 24:1) or Satan (1 Chron. 21:1) who made David number Israel?

In our day, when The One Project trumpets Jesus as more important than anything else, let's rejoice rather than quibble because we haven't heard it all. Ellen White once wrote that if one had no other text in the Bible but John 3:16, "this alone would be a guide for the soul."⁴

And Jesus himself gave us a one-line summary of his Bible: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NRSV). Did he leave out some good things? Of course—so that we would know what is most important.

Thank you, Jesus.

¹ Ellen G. White, "The Work for This Time," *The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905, par. 21; reprinted in *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1946), p. 28.

² White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913), p. 432.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), p. 370.



Adventist Man

A SATIRICAL LOOK AT ADVENTIST LIFE

Check Out These Much-Needed Upgrades

Our archaic Adventist Today building is under renovation at the moment (the architects are dragging us kicking and screaming from the 17th century into the 18th century). This morning, while ducking into the building under the tower scaffolding, I thought: *Maybe Adventist culture needs retooling, too.* After climbing to my garret and jotting a few notes on an illegal notepad (I stole it from copyediting), I offer my church these upgrades:

The Ghostbook. Up to now we've called them "guestbooks," but we need a name change. Have you ever actually paged through the one in your church's foyer? Most guests serenely ignore this book, and when they do fill it out, they write such crystal-clear entries as "P. Fmurbrk," or "Jeff Gimble and fmly, Rnoke," or (and here I suspect the jocular hand of a middle-schooler) "Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus."

For all practical purposes, these signers are ghosts and not guests, since they're fully as uncontactable as someone who has passed Beyond the Veil. The only folks who do give complete information are from far, far away: "Jandwarlal Rulangpanh, Soorlie Rulangpanh, and little Muktafa Rulangpanh, 273 Boojerling Lane, 37719932-5547 Tolarlpoona 592.6, Chandwal GR 82, Tel: 14-256-7715 Ext 3278, please ring thrice."

The "Two" Project. Blessings on The One Project. They mean extremely well—and if I wore a hat, I would doff it respectfully to them—but

consider how firmly "two" is already entrenched in our culture. There are two hands, arms, legs, feet, brain-halves, political parties, bicycle wheels, and on and on. (Notice, if you will, that even in this example the word "on" is repeated twice—not three times, not just once.) Left and right, yes and no, OT and NT, ones and zeroes, liberals and conservatives, night and day, in and out, up and down, over and under, apples and oranges, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, David and Goliath, initiative and referendum, dichotomy. ("Dichotomy" is, I understand, what Prince Charles said about his first marriage.)

(Let that last one simmer a bit. You'll get it.) So what would a "Two" Project seminar look like? Everybody shows up and says: "Well, it looks as though there really are two sides to this issue. Let's go back home and think it over."

Mortarization. The Catholics have the monopoly on "canonization," but since Adventism's guns aren't as big, we're stuck with mortars. Whom or what should we mortarize? Why not start with the drafty garret I sleep in? Just give me a half-hour to get my stuff out before you pull the trigger.

The Four Tempura Mints. This is the upgrade we need the most, even though it's sure to ruffle the feathers of the "Four Temperaments" fans. I mean, what would we do without the "Choleric" label that permits us to fly off the handle, then shrug helplessly and say, "But that's the way I am." And surely you can't expect sociable Sanguines to be as organized as the more analytical Melancholics, right? And which of us survey-takers hasn't deliberately tried to skew our profile toward Phlegmatic? "Go away," we murmur from our recliners when the Choleric try to goad us into action. "I'm relaxed and peaceful by nature."

As always, the best upgrades—as in electronic

and automotive technology and especially in stir-fry—come from Asia. Visualize with me (no, not the bad kind of visualization, but the good kind) the following.

Imagine four tasty little candy mints dipped in tempura, each a different color, each representing a Tempura Mint trait. One you've chosen a trait-mint (this is known as the "trait-mint treatment"), chew on the mint while you meditate on that trait. Here are the traits:

- **Cleric.** The person with the Cleric trait tends to be a bit preachy (the "cleric" part) but balances that with a love of office-supply stores (that's the "clerical" part).

- **Sanguine.** Pronounced "sing-gwinn," this trait is possessed by people who hum a lot. Becoming crassly commercial for a moment, I have acquired a large stock of temple-chimes designed to give hummers the correct note. These are genuine—each one is a real hum-dinger. Get yours today! (Translation: Get them out of my stockroom and into yours!)

- **Melon-colic.** These are otherwise normal people who, when fed cantaloupe as children, fussed and cried a lot because their tummies hurt. They should be rocked to sleep, using rocks the size of baseballs.

- **Flagmatic.** These are knee-jerk patriots who automatically salute the Stars and Stripes even when it shows up on postage stamps.

Okay, there you are. *Change the world, Choleric!* Me, I'm relaxed and peaceful by nature.

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