**Instead of Deadly Commonplaces**

*One Boy and Baseball*

**Sacraments of Mercy**

*Testimonies: An Excerpt from* Ellen Harmon White

**The Hedgehog, the Fox, and Ellen G. White**

*A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*

**VOLUME 42 ISSUE 2** ■ SPRING 2014

community through conversation

# SPECTRUM

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**Cover**
*The Gospel of Good Health,* watercolor, 1990. By Vernon Nye.

**About the Artist: Vernon Nye**
California Watercolor.com still features the landscape paintings of Vernon Nye, even though the prolific Adventist painter passed away in 2013 at the age of ninety-seven. As an elected member of the American Watercolor Society, his work has been exhibited and awarded honors in national exhibitions. Nye's fame also lives on at Pacific Union College where the lecture hall in the Rasmussen Art Gallery bears his name. In his twenty-one years as chairman of the art department at the college, he transformed the art program, establishing a commercial art studio in Fisher Hall that became the base for the California Art Service and the Albion Summer School of Art, the latter of which still offers annual summer classes. At the ceremony naming the lecture hall on Nye's ninetieth birthday, he was remembered as "an absolute wonder of a man, gifted and talented beyond compare."

Nye's career was bookended at the Adventist world headquarters. His first professional artwork was illustrating books at the Review and Herald where he shared a studio with Harry Anderson. That was followed by freelance projects for the U.S. Treasury Department and the Department of Defense, and eventually he became a staff illustrator for the Federal Civil Defense Department. In 1955, he moved from Washington, D.C. to PUC in Angwin, California. After twenty-one years there, he moved to Walla Walla College and taught there until his retirement in 1982. Following his retirement he was again asked to work for the church, painting its early work and Ellen G. White's visions. Those paintings now hang on the walls of the White Estate. It was from those paintings that we selected illustrations for the cover and section dividers of this issue of *Spectrum*.

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**back cover** The sound of something falling | BY BRENDA BUTKA

EDITORIAL ■ *from the editor*

# "Aha" Moments | BY BONNIE DWYER

Connecting the dots between contemporary events in order to understand their significance can be difficult. Painful introspection may be required. The perspective of history might be what is needed to reach an "aha" moment.

There was much on Lowell Bock's heart when we sat down to talk recently. He had been thinking about the fifty years he spent serving the Lord and the church (1946-1988), and he wanted to share his testimony and key insights. He reviewed his years as a pastor, then as a department secretary, conference president, union conference president, and a General Conference vice president. He had experienced the extreme hierarchal rule of a dictatorial conference president who kept the policy book under lock and key in his desk drawer. He had watched the laity become more educated and interested in having a say in church policies. He had been handed difficult assignments such as chairing the board of Pacific Press following the Merikay Silver lawsuit. He had served several General Conference presidents and noticed there was always a call for revival and reformation when a new administration came into office.

"The whole issue was 'What is Truth?'" he said, recalling discussions he had with then-General Conference president Robert Pierson who would say, "'Lowell, we're counting on you to hold the line.'"

To Pierson, Bock explained, there was no right or left—truth was a straight line. But Bock wondered, where was that line?

Bock's stories flowed. About the time of the Civil Rights Movement in the Southern New England Conference, when the graduate students expressed an interest in racial equality, Bock put them on a committee that drafted an amendment to the constitution forbidding racial discrimination. Much to the surprise of many church leaders, the amendment was passed at the constituency meeting and picked up by the General Conference. He said the Pacific Press had footed the bill for equality in the church when the Press agreed to pay the million-dollar settlement of the Merikay lawsuit against the advice from the General Conference. The backstory on the Consultation at Glacier View in 1980 was his desire to bring together the academic and administrative communities within the church, only to have the agenda scrapped and replaced with a trial on the views of Des Ford. Bock had experienced much, and came to realize that the church leadership, at times, was part of the problem.

Bock's "aha" moment came in reading Daniel and seeing the connection between repentance and revival. Now, he feels that the leadership needs to follow the example of Daniel and repent, because without repentance there can be no revival and reformation.

There have been several "aha" moments for me in my understanding of church history over the past few months. One of them came while reading Gerry Chudleigh's account of the history of headship theology within Adventism that appears in this issue. I never thought that Adventists believed in headship theology. Chudleigh helps connect the dots.

Graeme Sharrock's chapter on Ellen White's testimonies from the new book by Oxford University Press provided more "aha" moments as I came to a better understanding of White's writings and their role in the church. We've included that in this issue, too.

Charles Scriven's reporting from the recent conference on World War I and Adventism connects more dots regarding Reform Adventism.

That such "aha" moments can come from reading history as well as experiencing it gives me hope—hope that connecting the dots of the past can help us understand present truth, so our community can progress in our theology and life together. ■

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**Bonnie Dwyer** is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.

# Instead of Deadly Commonplaces | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Here are three deadly commonplaces:

- Proper Christian religion is private; it has nothing to do with public, or political, issues. In your role *as a believer*, you have nothing to say concerning the aims and conduct of the state.
- The Bible is, for all practical purposes, inerrant. Put your finger on a passage and you put your finger on God's will.
- Apocalyptic prophecy foretells the chronology of the end-time, and if you pay attention to it you can know what is going to happen next.

In a letter sent on August 4, 1914, the president of the East German Union Conference assured the German authorities that Adventists were bound "together in defense of the 'Fatherland,' and under these circumstances we will bear arms on Saturday (Sabbath)." Members would honor the emperor, following the command set down for them in 1 Peter 2:13–17.

About the same time the church's leadership in Hamburg sent a letter to German congregations saying that "we should do our military duties with joy." They said the story of Jericho's fall in Joshua 6 showed that "the children of God have made use of military weapons and that they also performed military duties on the Sabbath."

The Adventist faith would be no stumbling block to the nation's imperial ambitions, and this was explained with the support of Scripture. But here apocalyptic prophecy did not come into play: church members "knew" that the crucial eschatological events had to do with Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, so apocalyptic writings bore no practical relevance to goings-on in Germany.

On May 12–15, 2014 at Friedensau Adventist University in Germany, more than one hundred participants from twenty-six countries came together for a conference on "The Impact of World War I on Seventh-day Adventists." About fifteen of them represented the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement that arose when German leaders broke with the pioneer position of refusal to bear arms in war. German churches had swiftly disfellowshipped members who did not want to go along with the will of the state, and from those so treated came the first leaders of the Reform Movement.

Some twenty formal presentations offered compelling perspective on the context and significance of what happened during World War I. Participants heard about the whole history of Adventism's relationship to war, going back to the conflict between the North and South in America, when Adventists declared themselves opposed to killing, and up to the present day, when members regularly train as combatants. Presenters discussed the prevailing last-day-events theory at the time of World War I, which said that the transfer of the Ottoman Empire's capital from Constantinople to Jerusalem would portend Armageddon and signal the Second Coming. They told stories about Adventist attitudes to military service in specific nations. One paper traced the story of Adventist complicity with totalitarian regimes to the present day. Another described the frustration church leaders felt when, as the war

**New thinking really could restore old virtue, and help also to improve upon it.**

began, they realized the ailing Ellen White could no longer offer counsel that would help settle disagreements.

There was theological commentary as well as historical description. Noting that the then-dominant eschatological theory had turned out to be wrong, one presenter argued against "idle" or "sensationalized" speculations about the future; the story of Jonah, he said, is ample evidence that predictive prophecy is "conditional" and has "pastoral," not merely informational, intent. Another reflected on tensions that emerge when differences of opinion and practice come into play, and said questions of diversity and concord cry out for deeper theological reflection. Still another inquired into the matter of individual and denominational character; the fact that many Adventists seemed unprepared for war-related challenges suggests, he said, that the stories we tell ourselves need to be re-examined. The final paper of the conference looked ahead, saying that Seventh-day Adventists must reconsider their hermeneutics, or theory of biblical interpretation, and shift from an overly "propositional" understanding of doctrine to one that is more focused on the "practical," on the actual living-out, that is, of the Christian faith.

**The church is a challenge to state power, and overlooking this makes it a tool of state power, sometimes a tool of dictators.**

Presenters told stories not only of moral drift but also of moral persistence. A formal apology to the Reform Movement, just issued by the two German unions and read loud at the conference, generated moments of joyful reconciliation. All this, together with an overall longing for what the final presenter called "the radical option for peace and reconciliation," helped make the conference invigorating as well as sobering. New thinking really could restore old virtue, and help also to improve upon it.

New thinking will require, certainly, recognition that even if the church does not conspire to control politics—does not seek worldly power—it still constitutes an alternative approach to shared life, or to what it means to be a God-honoring society. The church is a challenge to state power, and overlooking this makes it a tool of state power, sometimes a tool of dictators. It is delusional to think proper religion is wholly private and thus wholly indifferent to politics.

New thinking will require reading the Bible not as a collection of infallible propositions but as a story tending toward a grand ideal. When the current president of the Reformed Movement's General Conference spoke on Wednesday night, his "theme text" was John 18:36, where Jesus tells Pilate that if his "kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." But his kingdom, Jesus said, is not from this world. German leaders in 1914 thought the Jericho story made the case for bearing arms even on Sabbath. One leader quoted from 1 Peter, satisfied that a short passage including the words "Fear God. Honor the emperor," was adequate support for what he was saying. But if he had read further—read a longer part of the book or considered it in light of the whole Gospel—he would have realized that Jesus suffered injustice without using weapons and left us (so says 1 Peter itself, also in chapter 2) "an example" so that we "should follow in his steps." For in the Bible taken whole, Christ is the grand ideal, the decisive key to Christian faithfulness.

New thinking will require, too, that apocalyptic books and passages be read for their immediate moral relevance. These writings are not meant to satisfy the informational yearnings of timetable speculators. Prophecy is conditional, history is surprising, and Turkey was a moral distraction. The real business of apocalyptic imagination is new vision and new hope, the making of communities that hold their ground against evil and stand tall for what is good. It is not the dictators and warmongers who are worthy, but the lamb now seated at God's right hand. ■

**Charles Scriven** chairs Adventist Forum.

# Winter issue prompts research, reminiscing

## "TOSC Struggles Reading the Bible"

I greatly appreciated Bonnie Dwyer's evenhanded attempts to present the information from the January meetings of TOSC fairly. After reading through the reports on TOSC in the latest issue of *Spectrum*, I went to the GC Archives and actually looked up and read all of the condensed reports from each of the world divisions. I came to some different conclusions than Bonnie did, and thought I would briefly go over those, and also point out something I noticed that has not been mentioned by any other writers that I have seen, either in *Spectrum* or on the web responses I have seen so far. I will admit I have not followed the blogs, so may have missed something there, but I find the blogs rapidly degenerate into personality attacks from both sides on this issue, for which I have no stomach. There is not much in the way of respectful dialogue.

I am not as sanguine as Bonnie about the willingness of the divisions to tolerate women's ordination (WO). Each of the divisions that posted took a strong position either for or against, with one notable exception: Southern Asia Division (SAD). SAD's presentation was the shortest, most succinct presentation in which I saw the most honesty of any of the divisions. They stated that they could find no clear mandate for either position, and would abide by the world church decision in 2015. The rest of the divisions took clear positions, though several that were strongly opposed stated that in the interest of unity they would abide by the world church decision in 2015. I noticed that Bonnie stated only one division was strongly opposed. I disagree with her here—I think most were strongly opposed, but willing for the sake of unity to abide by the voted outcome—knowing, in my opinion, that the world majority would still hold to a "No" vote, so this becomes mere lip service. What Bonnie failed to mention is that the division that was strongly opposed was actually retro-opposed. What I mean here is that they want the church to eliminate all ordination of women to any office in the church. I believe after reading Sakae Kubo's position that he would find this is a far more consistent position given their "headship theology," though if I read him right, he does not believe "headship theology" to be biblical.

Now to the point I really wanted to make, that I think all others have missed. I am going to make some generalizations here, recognizing clearly that within each division (on both sides) there are pockets of people who do not fit the generalization, but recognizing that the division-presented position is presented as the majority position. All of the divisions that favored WO belong to socio-cultural areas of the world that are no longer predominantly patriarchal in social structure, while all the divisions that opposed WO belong to areas of the world that are still strongly patriarchal in social structure. My point is that this is *not* really a theological/biblical conundrum; it is a socio/political one.

I also want to state clearly that I agree with George Tichy (on the blogs) about one thing: this is a *moral* issue! I take the position that "this church will" *not* "triumph" (to misquote EGW) until it gets beyond this issue. Until we as a church are known by how we love each other, we are *not* the people of the kingdom. I don't have to agree with anyone's theology, but I do have a mandate from heaven to love them into the kingdom. There is only one mark of true discipleship that Jesus lists in the Gospels: "Everyone will know you are my disciples by how you love each other" (my free paraphrase).

Finally, I think we are consistently asking the wrong question, which is why we keep butting heads on this issue. The TOSC is absolutely correct about one overriding principle: *it is God who calls*. Ordination is merely the body of Christ recognizing God's call. If we truly believe that Jesus is God, then Jesus is the final arbiter of our theology, of our praxis, and of truth, *not* Paul. So Jesus' call to pre-fall theology is normative for his church: "…from the beginning it was *not* so…" (emphasis mine). But the one statement we consistently over-

My point is that [women's ordination] is not really a theological/ biblical conundrum; it is a socio/political one.

—Dave Reynolds

look of Jesus' that is definitive here is this: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matt. 12:30–32, NIV). So as a church, and as a people, if we do not recognize the call of the Holy Spirit, we are in grave danger of committing the unpardonable sin. Do we as a church and as a people really want to go on record as telling God who he can and who he cannot call? Whoa, that is not a process I want any part of.

I am praying for my church that we will move beyond this, and learn to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in those called by the Holy Spirit.

Dave Reynolds [Brother to Edwin Reynolds, who was listed as a co-defendant of the "headship theology" position at TOSC, and with whom I respectfully disagree. The point being that even within families, not all see this the same. I believe between my brothers and I it is 2 to 1 against WO, and I still love them dearly.]

*Dwyer responds: Thank you Dave for going to the original papers to learn more.*

*In my report I quoted one of the TOSC members about the positions of the Divisions. Since he was there I felt his reading not only of the documents but also hearing the way in which they were presented trumped my reading of the Division reports.*

## "The 1960s Crisis at the Seminary"

I joined the Seminary student body in 1965 following a two-year break after graduation from Pacific Union College, and completed my work on the Bachelor of Divinity degree in December of 1967. So, I experienced the turmoil and challenges to my faith that Dr. Weiss mentions in his article.

To me the greatest challenge was the "Introduction to the New Testament" class taught by Drs. Sakae Kubo, Earle Hilgert and Herold Weiss. My degree from PUC had been in religion rather than theology. Perhaps this had not given me the background that others had for this class. In any case, I was challenged in regard to the authority and function of the Bible in ways that I had not imagined possible. The reality of the manuscripts that formed the basis of the biblical text today was shocking. I was forced to confront the fact that some of my ideas were not truth.

My college experience had given me a commitment to follow truth wherever it led, as opposed to the idea of some that one should follow truth as it supported the previous understanding of God and the Bible. I came to realize that God had more to teach me than I understood. The question I faced was, was I going to allow God to lead me in my spiritual development, or was I going to close my mind to anything outside of previously-defined boundaries? The result of my decision to follow truth wherever it led was that I came out of this class with a reaffirmed understanding to the authority and function of the Bible in my life today. My faith in the leading of God in the doctrinal development of the SDA denomination was intact.

The lessons that I learned in this class were invaluable in my later success as a clergyperson working outside of the SDA denomination along with clergy from other denominations. Following seven and a half years serving as a pastor in the Potomac Conference, I served for the next eighteen years as a U.S. Army chaplain, endorsed by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. This included three years on the teaching faculty of the Army Chaplain School. It was my prior background from the Seminary that allowed me to be seen by the students as a moderate bridge between the fundamentalists and the liberals.

Following my retirement from the Army, I became a chaplain for the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Eastern Colorado Health Care system in Denver. In February I retired as a VA chaplain with twenty years of service credit. It was the training that I received from the Seminary that gave me the background I needed to

**Feedback** ➜ **continued** *on page 43...*

A homemade "lemon peel" baseball

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## Los Angeles Dodgers honor Frank Jobe

BY CHLOÉ ROBLES-EVANO

On April 21, 2014 the Dodgers named their training facility in honor of Frank Jobe (*left*), who served as the team physician for forty years.

Frank Jobe, innovator of the "Tommy John" surgery, passed away on March 6 in Los Angeles at the age of eighty-eight. Jobe is an alumna of Collegedale Academy, La Sierra University and Loma Linda University. La Sierra University named Jobe as its Alumnus of the Year on April 19, 2013.

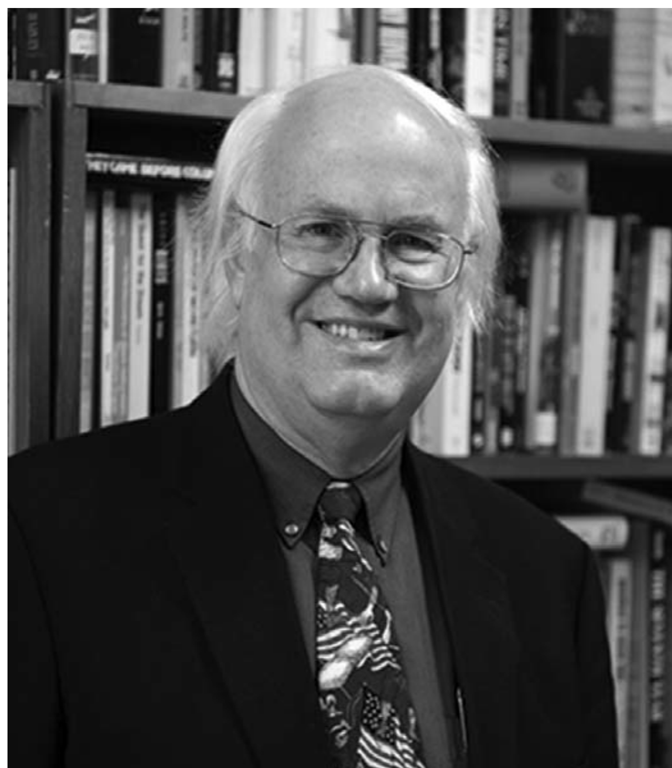
Jobe revolutionized sports medicine in 1974 with a surgery that gave pitchers a career longevity previously unheard of. Tommy John, a Dodger pitcher, tore his ulnar collateral ligament and had no hope of playing again without surgery. Jobe proposed taking a ligament from his good elbow and using it to repair the ligament in his pitching arm.

The operation was a success and in 2014, an estimated one-third of all Major League pitchers have undergone this procedure. Without Jobe's groundbreaking procedure it is estimated by an ESPN report that the amount of pitchers in Major League Baseball would be decreased by approximately twenty-five percent.

Jobe contributed as the Dodgers' team physician for forty years until his retirement in 2008. Even after his retirement he actively participated in the Dodgers organization by attending games, conversing with players and staff, and acting as a special advisor to the chairman of the franchise.

Jobe is survived by his wife, Beverly, four sons, their spouses, and eight grandchildren. ■

**Chloé Robles-Evano** recently graduated from Pacific Union College with a communications degree. She manages subscriptions and assists with the *Spectrum* website.



## In memory of Gary Land

BY BEN McARTHUR

When Gary Land died the last Sabbath of this past April, we lost a person who stood at the center of the Adventist historical community for over forty years. His contributions went well beyond the many books he wrote and edited and beyond his influence as teacher and department chair at Andrews University. He served the church as a Christian intellectual, and in the *New York Review of Books* sense of that term, was perhaps the first in Adventist higher education. If I exaggerate, it's only slightly. Let me explain.

Gary was a graduate of Monterey Bay Academy and Pacific Union College. From college he went directly to University of California Santa Barbara, where he studied

A collectible vintage baseball photo

American intellectual history with Robert Kelley (and worked for Otis Graham). When Ronald Numbers left Andrews for Loma Linda in 1970, Gary received the call to Berrien Springs. He would spend his entire career at Andrews, retiring in 2010.

**Gary's humility and willingness to question his own ideas became his professional persona.**

I was there at his beginning. Having survived the gauntlet of Don McAdams' world civ class as a freshman, I found myself the next year in Gary's American history sequence. I saw a lanky and already-balding figure enter the classroom. Soft-spoken and easily embarrassed, he was the model of diffidence. It was an endearing quality. Gary's humility and willingness to question his own ideas became his professional persona.

None of that mattered to me then. What I encountered was an approach to history I didn't know existed: the history of ideas, styles, and sensibilities. It was exhilarating. Without the benefit of PowerPoint (or any visual aid other than chalk and blackboard), Gary elucidated the concepts that shaped America. I soon determined that this was the subject for me. Over the next two years I took whatever courses he offered. In the process, Gary assigned books of a complexity not often seen in our current classrooms: works by Edmund Morgan, Bernard Bailyn, Richard Hofstadter, and Perry Miller—all giants in the American history field in the 1970s. I took advantage of his good nature (and the fact that he was still a bachelor) to occasionally drop by his apartment, where we would talk literature. When he recommended John Dos Passos or William Styron, I dutifully found copies.

It was Gary's engagement not only with history but also with literature and religious thought that gave him a special place in Adventist academia. Andrews University in the 1970s housed an unusual number of accomplished faculty (the Seminary purge notwithstanding). Gary stood apart for his knowledge of the Western intellectual tradition and particularly the currents of American thought. He always seemed the best-read person in any gathering. Further, he consciously sought to infuse this vein of intellectual serious-mindedness into Adventist discourse. I think of one example: his book *Teaching History: A Seventh-day Adventist Approach*, was both a conceptually sophisticated and a practical treatment of the subject.

I trust that most veterans of the Adventist Forum community recognize Gary's central role through the decades. Although not one of the organization's founders, as author and long-time member of *Spectrum's* editorial board, he helped shape the most important organ of open discussion in the church.

At this sad time, we can be grateful that Gary had the satisfaction of seeing one of his most significant works, *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* (which he co-edited with Terrie Aamodt and Ron Numbers), fresh off the press. And though he will not see the final product, he was able to complete his biography of Uriah Smith. Predictably, he already had set to work on a new project.

To end where I began, Gary Land occupied a singular place in the Adventist academy. He often devoted his time to championing the projects of others (as in making sure that Everett Dick's groundbreaking 1930 dissertation on the Millerites finally found publication in 1994). Such efforts were in the service of his driving vision: a church, a Christianity informed by his-

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torical reflection. Gary was part of that special generational cohort which nudged our denomination toward intellectual self-scrutiny. Although the church has wavered in its commitment to this uncomfortable endeavor, Gary marched straight ahead, to the end persuaded that only the examined religious tradition was worth embracing. ■

**Ben McArthur** is professor of history at Southern Adventist University. After writing two books on the history of American theater, he switched his scholarly focus to the Adventist Church. He is writing a biography of A. G. Daniells, the longest-serving president of the General Conference.

## One Boy and Baseball:
### The 1887 Diary of S. Parker Smith, Age 15

BY GARY LAND

Renowned baseball historian Harold Seymour describes in general terms how the game of baseball was played by boys in the late nineteenth century, but there is little published information that provides a more specific picture of how youth interacted with the game. The 1887 diary of fifteen-year-old S. Parker Smith of Battle Creek, Michigan, offers insight into the role that the game played in the life of one teenager and more generally offers a glimpse into how the game of baseball was played by boys in the late-nineteenth century.[1]

In the mid-1880s, Battle Creek, located in the southwestern portion of Michigan's lower peninsula, was a rapidly growing city with a population of more than ten thousand. Baseball arrived in the city by the mid-1860s[2] and over the next two decades several teams with such names as the "Columbia," "Colored," "Crescent," "Excelsior," "Irish," and "Monarch" functioned at one time or another. According to a local historian, games were played on the flats near the Grand Trunk Railroad tracks and on Merrett's Commons between Mrs. Merrett's woods and her orchards.[3]

Battle Creek was also home to a large Seventh-day Adventist community. This young denomination, which had risen out of the Millerite movement of the 1840s, had established its headquarters in Battle Creek in 1855. In addition to its General Conference which administered the church, it had also developed three important institutions. The Review and Herald Publishing Association had been incorporated in 1861 and by the mid-1880s was the largest commercial printer in Michigan, in addition to publishing Adventist periodicals and books. The Battle Creek Sanitarium had been founded in 1866, and under the leadership of John Harvey Kellogg expanded rapidly in the 1870s and 1880s to attract an international clientele. Finally, the Adventists established Battle Creek College in 1874, which despite temporary closure in 1881 had nearly 500 students in 1887.[4] These institutions were located close to one another in what was known as the "West End" of Battle Creek, and developed around them an Adventist community of more than 2,000 people.[5]

Samuel Parker Smith was part of this community because his father, Uriah, had been an editor of the denomination's general paper, the *Review and Herald*, ever since its move to Battle Creek.

A very young S. Parker Smith

**By June, baseball was clearly the dominant game, for Parker played football only once, but baseball sixteen times.**

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**The Uriah Smith Family. Front, left to right: Harriet Smith, Charles Stevens Smith, Uriah Smith. Back, left to right: Annie Arabelle Smith, Leon Alberti Smith, Uriah Wilton Smith, Samuel Parker Smith.**

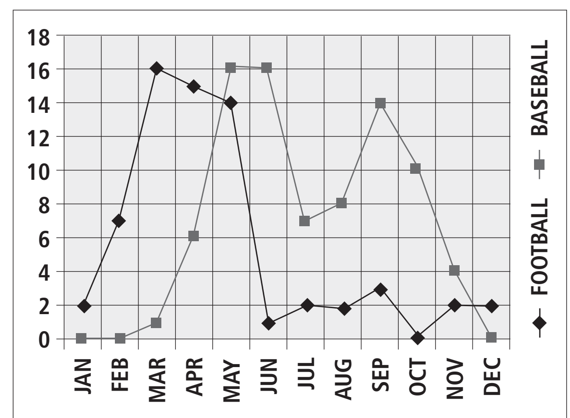
**"Had a game of base ball in afternoon between married men and single men, which came out 20 to 8 in favor of single men."**

**—S. Parker Smith**

"Parker," as Samuel was known, attended Battle Creek College while living at home with his family. Parker began keeping a diary in 1884, making several references to baseball, but only maintained it through the month of April.[6] In 1887, however, he kept up his diary throughout the year. It was a "pocket" diary, and the small volume gave only minimal space for recording daily activities and thoughts. Probably because of this physical limitation, Parker's daily accounts are rather cryptic, rarely supplying much detail but giving the highlights of each day's activities. Thus a typical daily entry might include references to a book he was reading, a trip to the store, and his work in the garden. Among these various activities, Parker, who clearly enjoyed games of all kinds, included many references to baseball that offer a clear picture of one late-nineteenth-century boy's relationship to the game.

The two outdoor games that Parker engaged in most frequently were football and baseball. The diary provides information that suggests the seasonal trajectory of the games over the course of the year (see chart below). In contrast to our own time, football was primarily a late-winter and spring sport for Parker, and he begins with two references to football in January[7] and seven in February.[8] Although the diary's first reference to baseball appeared on Sunday, March 13, where Parker states that he "Played base & football,"[9] he continued to emphasize football with sixteen additional references during the month,[10] compared with that single baseball reference.

In April, the references to playing some form of baseball increased to six,[11] compared with fifteen football references.[12] The ratio between football and baseball shifted in May, and by June, baseball was clearly the dominant game, for Parker played football only once,[13] but baseball sixteen times.[14]




**The seasonal trajectory of baseball and football as recorded by S. Parker Smith.**

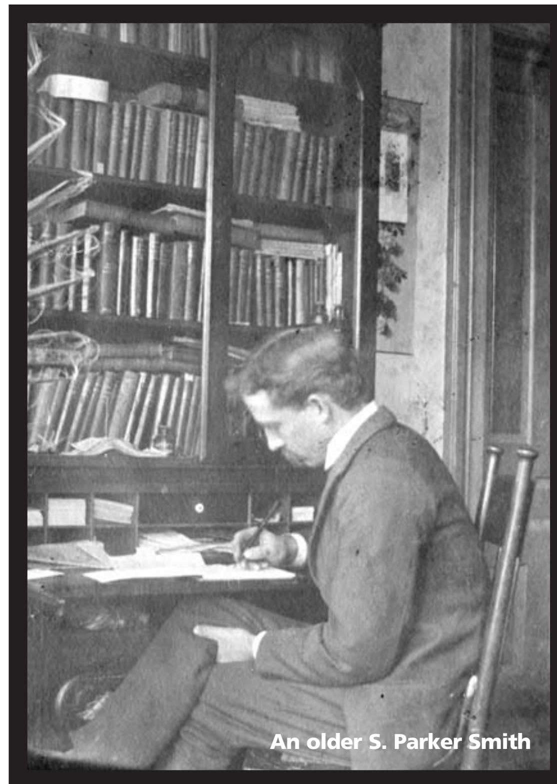
Although one might expect a continued increase in baseball activity in the high summer months of July and August, that was not the case with Parker Smith. In July he played baseball seven times[15] and football twice,[16] while the following month he played baseball eight times[17] and again made two references to football.[18] Baseball activity picked up again in September, however, probably because the start of school at Battle Creek College brought more young people together, and continued going strong through the fall season to November. In December Parker made no references to baseball and indicated that he played football once.[19] Thus, in the case of Parker Smith, baseball activity increased significantly in the late spring and early summer, decreased during the summer months of July and August, and reached its highest level in the early fall months of September and October.

For Parker, the term "baseball" referred to a variety of other baseball-related games. Presumably Parker's references to simply playing baseball refer to a game with two teams playing against one another, although not necessarily involving a full complement of nine players on each side. Most of these baseball "games" were probably informal affairs, but Parker occasionally speaks of playing a "match game." On Sunday, May 29, for instance, he states that he "played in College nine in match game with Sanitarium which came out 18 for coll. and 16 for San."[20] A few weeks later, the two institutions once again played against each other in a three-inning game, and the college won 15 to 13.[21] Although he did not use the term "match game," Parker apparently also played other formally-organized games as well. In August, he participated in a game, presumably on a team of college students or other West Enders, against a team from the St. Philippe Catholic school or church, with Parker playing the catcher's position. On this particular occasion his team lost by a score of 25 to 7.[22]

As baseball activity picked up in September, Parker played in games where teams were formed on unique bases. "Had a game of base ball in afternoon between married men and single men, which came out 20 to 8 in favor of single men.[36] I pitched for the single men."[23] In early November, in what appears to have been a school-related game, "Small fellows played big ones. I pitched for little boys, and had great freedom. We played in afternoon. They had to get 5 men out before the side was out and we only 3. Beat them 20 to 21."[24]

Most of these matches and more informal games took place on the north side of the Battle Creek College campus, what Parker referred to as the "Coll. Yd."[25] Although called a "college," the school actually provided education from the elementary through the college level. Perhaps because of the wide range of ages on one campus, the close-knit nature of the Adventist community, and Parker's proximity to the college, his baseball games appear to have involved a fairly wide range of ages. The *Battle Creek City Directory* provides occupational information on some of the individuals that Parker names in his diary, identifying H. Ertzen Kellogg as a gilder at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Charles L. Kilgore as a teacher, Charles Fields as

**The diary of S. Parker Smith provides us with a unique picture of one fifteen-year-old's enthusiasm for and activity in the game.**


An older S. Parker Smith

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Young boys playing baseball

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a music teacher, Edwin Barnes as a professor of music at the college, William Johnson as an office clerk at the Sanitarium, and Fred Roberts as an engraver at the Review and Herald Publishing Association.[26] It seems that Parker's games often involved young people from their mid-teens to at least their early twenties. Other hints in his diary suggest that he sometimes played with older men, as when he twice mentions playing on the "College nine" in a match game with the sanitarium, writes about a team of single men playing a team of married men, and briefly mentions a church picnic game.[27] For Parker, it appears that baseball was not simply a game that he played with neighborhood boys of approximately his own age, but instead involved youth, from mid-teens to young men in their twenties and perhaps even older.

But much of Parker's baseball activity did not involve team competition. Many times he simply refers to "playing catch."[28] Parker seems to have preferred being a pitcher and sometimes took advantage of these games of catch to improve his skills. On September 7, Parker notes that "Eertzen Kellogg came up in the afternoon and we practiced throwing curves."[29] In October, he "Slung curves to Will Johnson at noon."[30] Parker's interest in learning how to throw curve balls occurred only thirteen years after the pitch experienced what Peter Morris calls its "breakout year" in 1874,[31] and suggests that it did not take too long for a feature of the professional game to work its way down to young boys' play. Parker also writes several times of playing *grounders*,[32] presumably a game in which a single batter hit ground balls to one or more fielders, with his brother or a friend and playing *bat-up* and *scrub*.[33] Whatever the specific nature of games such as grounders, bat up, and scrub may have been, they were clearly forms of baseball played when there were too few players to form teams.

Historian Harold Seymour notes that even after the Civil War, "ready-made baseballs long remained scarce among youngsters."[34] Such seems to have been the case with Parker. After a summer and early fall of ball playing, in November Parker took his "old ball to pieces, put in a new rubber ball instead of a stone and wound it up again and got the cover to it partly cut out." The reference to the "stone" suggests that he may have been playing with a homemade ball.[35] He finished repairing the ball the next day, but two days later he unfortunately "Batted my ball with Chuck's bat and ripped it all to pieces."[36]

Although he often played, Parker at times was a spectator of the sport. The high point of his role as a spectator occurred on August 2, when Battle Creek hosted an Emancipation Day celebration that, the city newspaper reported, drew some five thousand visitors. Although considered a black holiday, the event was interracial, beginning with a parade that started at the Methodist Episcopal Church at ten o'clock in the morning, and included various dignitaries, color bearers, bands, and "Base Ball Clubs, Foot Ball Teams, [and] One Hundred Yard Runners."[37] Parker "Went down to City Park & watched the procession of baseball

nines etc. which passed to driving park," where Charles Fields paid his fifteen-cent admission fee. He then "played with downtown nines in the game of football. [...] The game of baseball 9 spots vs. Charlotte ended in 7 for former and 0 for latter."[38]

One obviously cannot make any broad generalizations based upon the diary of a single boy. But Parker Smith's diaries pose several questions that deserve further investigation. First, it is apparent that football and baseball competed with one another for the boy's attention, but that baseball gained ascendency as the summer advanced into fall. When, one wonders, did baseball become the summer game and football make its transition from late winter and spring to fall? Second, how common was it for baseball-related games to involve boys and young men of a rather wide range of ages? Was this a unique aspect related to Smith's proximity to a college that was part of a close-knit religious community, or was age differentiation not so significant in the nineteenth century? Third, was Smith's level of baseball activity typical of teenagers in the late 1880s? Between mid-March and early November he played some form of baseball approximately one-third of the time. As his diary indicates, Smith also had household responsibilities that limited the time available for playing games. It would be useful to determine how Smith's participation with baseball compared with that of his contemporary boys. Finally, it would be interesting to learn more about the baseball-related games that Smith played. Writer-historian Paul Dickson has described "scrub" in some detail, but what was *bat-up* and how did it differ from *scrub*? Was *grounders* simply what the name suggests, one boy hitting ground balls to another? And where did boys such as Parker learn the techniques for pitching, or *slinging* as Parker described it, drop balls and curves? Hopefully other diaries and late-nineteenth century documents can be found that will help us gain a broader perspective of the involvement of boys and young men in baseball. In the meantime, the diary of S. Parker Smith provides us with a unique picture of one fifteen-year-old's enthusiasm for and activity in the game.

So what happened to this fervent young ballplayer? Parker graduated from Battle Creek College in 1895. In the early 1890s, however, the college faculty, concerned about what they perceived as over-enthusiasm for sports, banned match games.[39] Unfortunately, we do not know how Parker responded to this decision. After graduation, Parker worked as a teacher for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Michigan and the Caribbean, and from 1903 to 1918 taught at San Fernando Academy, a denominational secondary school in southern California. He eventually left teaching to grow fruit and raise chickens and, at the age of ninety, died in California in 1962.[40] Whether he retained his youthful enthusiasm for baseball is not known. ■

**Perhaps because of the close-knit nature of the Adventist community... his baseball games appear to have involved a fairly wide range of ages.**

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**Gary Land** was a professor emeritus at Andrews University,

after retiring in 2010. In addition to his work in Adventist history, he wrote several articles on baseball history and literature. He also edited *Growing Up with Baseball* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), and was a member of the Society for American Baseball Research. He recently lost his battle with cancer on April 26, 2014 and will be remembered by the church community as a major figure in Adventist history.


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2. Peter Morris identifies the Battle Creek Peninsular Club and the Battle Creek City Club playing one another in 1866. See Morris, *Baseball Fever: Early Baseball in Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 121.

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**Much of Parker's baseball activity did not involve team competition. Many times he simply refers to "playing catch."**

Two kids playing barn ball in the 1800s

*Hope, Uriah Smith* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 69–80; and Numbers, Ronald L., *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, 3rd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 156–183.

6. "S. Parker Smith Diary" (1884), Smith/Bovee Collection, Box 2, Fld. 1, Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

7. "S. Parker Smith Diary" (1887), Uriah Smith/Mark Bovee Collection, Box 2, Fld. 3, Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. January 25 and 28, January 25 and 28. Hereafter referred to as Smith Diary.

8. Ibid., Feb. 9, 10, 16, 20, 22, 23. The February 20 entry states, "Played football about all the forenoon. …Played football over 2 hours in afternoon."

9. Ibid., March 13.

10. Ibid., March 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 27.

11. Ibid., April 3, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19.

12. Ibid., April 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

13. Ibid., June 21. Although Parker does not mention playing football on June 7, he states that on that day "Charlie Kilgore kicked the football in front of a horce [sic] & carriage 3 times & the last time it bounded into the back of the buggy and the women in buggy drove off with it."

14. Ibid., June 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26.

15. Ibid., July 5, 6, 12, 17,19, 24, 26.

16. Ibid., July 24, 31.

17. Ibid., Aug. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 18, 22, 26.

18. Ibid., Aug. 2, 7. The Aug. 2 football game was connected with baseball, however, for Parker "Played with downtown nines in the game of football."

19. Ibid., Dec. 7.

20. Ibid., May 29.

21. Ibid., June 13.

22. Ibid., Aug. 7.

23. Ibid., Sept. 6. It is not always clear whether Parker is writing "base ball" or "baseball"; in this case there appears to be a definite space between the words.

24. Ibid., Nov. 2.

25. VandeVere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 63; July 24; Aug. 22, Smith Diary. See also Gray, Meredith Jones, *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College & Emmanuel Missionary College, Andrews Heritage*, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2002), 37.

26. *Battle Creek City Directory*, 146, 147, 114, 74, 143, 190. Although a *Directory* was apparently published in 1887, I have been unable to find an extant copy. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that if individuals were listed as holding an occupation in 1889, they were somewhat older than Parker, who would have been seventeen years old that year. The 1890 United States census records, which would provide another means of checking the ages of some of these young men, were destroyed by fire in 1921.

27. Smith Diary, May 29, June 13, Aug. 18, Sept. 6.

28. Ibid., July 19. Sometimes he stated only that he "played catch a little," without indicating who else participated. Other times he named a friend, as on August 8 when he stated that he "Played catch with Walter Parmelee," and the following day when he "Played catch a little with Chuck," Aug. 9. It is unclear whether "Chuck" was his younger brother or someone else in the neighborhood.

29. Ibid., Sept. 7.

30. Ibid., June 7, Oct. 18.

31. Morris, Peter, *A Game of Inches: The Stories Behind the Innovations that Shaped Baseball* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 131.

32. For example, see Smith Diary, May 16, May 18, May 25.

33. Ibid., April 11, April 13, May 24, May 25. Parker spells the game as both "bat up" and "bat-up."

34. Seymour, *Baseball*, 8.

35. Three years earlier, Parker had written to his older brother Wilton, saying that "I make lots of balls and put a regular base ball cover on it (sic.) but I got kind of sick of them and pa got me a twenty cent one down to Peasleys and I and Charlie have lots of fun with it." Parker Smith to Wilton Smith, Battle Creek, May 3, 1884, Smith/Bovee Collection, Box 2, Fld. 40.

36. Smith Diary, Nov. 3, Nov. 4, November 6.

37. Battle Creek *Daily Moon*, Aug. 1, 1887. This edition listed the planned participants in the parade. The Aug. 2 edition simply said that the parade went as announced the previous day, and gave the estimated attendance. It is not clear why the event took place on Aug. 2 rather than Aug. 1, a date when Caribbean blacks celebrated the 1833 British emancipation of the slaves.

38. Smith Diary, Aug. 2. The Battle Creek *Daily Moon*, Aug. 3, 1887, reported that three football games took place between the "Battle Creeks," made up mostly of "Review and Herald boys," and the "Yahoos," largely from Ann Arbor, but said nothing about a baseball game.

39. VandeVere, *Wisdom Seekers*; Gray, *As We Set Forth*, 37.

40. Obituary, *Pacific Union Recorder* (August 20, 1962), 6; Obituary, *Review and Herald* (October 4, 1962), 25.

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# *Sacraments and Symbols in* THE BIBLE

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**DISCUSSED |** Loma Linda University, sacraments, Boston Marathon, Elijah, healers, the apostle Paul, Walter Brueggemann, 1 Kings, Luke, justice

# Sacraments of Mercy | BY KENDRA HALOVIAK VALENTINE

**How is a body a "sacrament of mercy"?**

The following is adapted from a presentation given at the School of Allied Health Professions' baccalaureate service, at the Loma Linda University Church in Loma Linda, California, on June 15, 2013.

I am grateful to Reverend Nancy Taylor for sharing with me her words of hope at the Interfaith Service of Healing that took place four days after the bombings at the Boston Marathon. If you watched the Interfaith Service on TV or online, you have already heard her words. That Thursday, Taylor, senior minister of the Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts, was the first to speak, and she said:

JOHN TLUMACK/THE BOSTON GLOBE/

> *Located at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, over the years Old South Church has developed a ministry with marathoners. They are a special breed…marathoners. They are built of sturdy stuff. As we do every year on Marathon Sunday…we blessed countless runners. Raising our arms in a forest of blessing, we invoked the words of the prophet Isaiah: "May you run and not grow weary, walk and not faint."*
>
> *And then…under a bright blue sky and in the midst of it all—in the very midst of a joy-filled, peaceful international competition—explosions. Chaos. Terror.*
>
> *From the Church's Tower, this is what I saw: I saw people run toward—not away from, but toward—the explosions, toward the mayhem and pain…into the danger. I saw people making of their own bodies sacraments of mercy.*[1]

That last phrase caught my attention: "bodies as sacraments of mercy." What does that mean? How is a body a "sacrament of mercy"? Adventists do not typically use the word "sacrament." Other Christians understand a "sacrament" as a "visible sign of inward grace"; something that possesses a sacred character or mysterious significance. Like the consecrated bread of the Lord's Supper, a sacrament is something that holds more than we can adequately express: bread, but more than bread; a symbol of God's mercy and Christ's sacrifice. It is a sacrament. Marriage and baptism are sometimes referred to as sacraments. They are sacred experiences that hold more than we can adequately express: a mysterious significance; symbols of God's mercy.

For Reverend Taylor, those running into the

PROPHET ELIJAH ON MOUNT HOREB, BY DANIELE DA VOLTERRA./HTTP://WWW.JEFFANGIEGOH.COM

chaos were making their own bodies something sacred; something that holds more than we can adequately express. They were bodies, but more than bodies—symbols of mercy. They ran into the chaos and used their eyes, mouths, hands, and backs to show mercy.

Like so many of you, I watched the same video clips over and over: the runner stumbling to the ground because of the blast, the look of disbelief on faces, the climbing over the shattered bleachers to free people. I also watched the video clips of strangers helping each other—holding limbs together, putting pressure on bleeding gaps in the skin, reassuring frightened parents and spouses and children, getting bloody and picking up people with strength they did not know they had—"making of their own bodies sacraments of mercy."

## Elijah's body as a "sacrament of mercy"

There is a strange story in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) where a body was used as a sacrament of mercy. It was a time of great suffering; a time of drought and starvation, disease and death. When, out of the blue, a prophet showed up named Elijah.

At the city gate of a remote town, he met a widow who was going about fixing her final meal. Elijah said to her: "Do not be afraid." Those words were life altering for her. They were words against death and assuring her of life.[2]

For sixteen chapters in the book of 1 Kings, readers meet ruler after ruler who did not care for the widows and the children; did not care that they were starving. Then, without any introduction other than his name "Elijah" (meaning "Yahweh is God"), the story changes. Suddenly a widow and her son actually become the focus of the narrative.

Later, when her son became so deathly ill "that there was no breath left in him" (1 Kings 17:17 NRSV), Elijah used his own body to bring life back. Elijah was unafraid of the deadly disease. Without hesitating for even a moment, Elijah placed his own body on the boy's and prayed to God: "Let this child's life come into him again" (17:21)!

In this scene—which, admittedly, challenges our modern sensibilities—Elijah placed his body between the boy and the powers of disease, the powers of chaos, death itself. Most likely this act comes from an ancient Near Eastern understanding concerning the transfer of life from one body into another "through a concrete gesture."[3] It is mysterious. It is a sacrament of mercy.

Elijah's strange action is also a passionate resisting; using his body as a way to shout "No!" to that which destroys human life. Again I am reminded of the people running toward the explosions. Before they knew how many bombs there were, they ran *toward* the hurting, placing their own bodies right there at Boston's "Ground Zero." They were resisting that which tried to destroy human life—"making their own bodies sacraments of mercy."

What life-altering words did they say that day to the hurting? Like Elijah, did they say:

"Do not be afraid."

"Don't worry, I'm going to get you help."

"It's going to be OK."

"I'll stay with you."

**They ran *toward* the hurting, placing their own bodies right there at Boston's "Ground Zero."**

"You aren't alone."

"Do not be afraid…"

These are life-altering words and actions; "sacraments of mercy."

Scripture says that the boy "revived" and Elijah "gave him to his mother" (1 Kings 17:23). Imagine the mother's amazement; the widow's joy.

**Often in between the healthy and the hurting are the healers.**

Hebrew Bible specialist Walter Brueggemann considers this story a critique of the kings who do not seem to care. There was supposed to be "justice at the gate," but for the widow, the gate is only a place to pick up sticks to cook her final meager meal. In her world, widows had nowhere to turn; no voice. Not when they were hungry, not when their sons and daughters were sick.

But the prophet Elijah also shows up at the gate. Elijah representing another way, God's way, showed up and acted on her behalf—a comfort for widows, a voice for the voiceless, turning death into life; making the gate a place of hope and justice once again.

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## Jesus' body as a "sacrament of mercy"

The story of Elijah and the widow is remembered by Luke, a writer in the New Testament. In his gospel, after Jesus proclaimed in his home synagogue in Nazareth that his ministry would be about preaching good news to the poor, release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, setting the oppressed free, proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18–19), it is then that Jesus reminded the people in his home church of the story of Elijah and the widow (4:26). Then, a few chapters later, in Luke 7, *Jesus* meets a widow at another city gate, the gate to the city of Nain.

She, too, had lost a son, her only son. The story's setup makes readers wonder: Why is Jesus being compared to Elijah?[4] Is Jesus also a prophet? Does he too speak life-altering words? Can he bring life to those whose breath is gone? Does Jesus restore "justice at the gate"?

The description of the scene includes two large crowds: the crowd of mourners with the widow, and the crowd of disciples. In between the two crowds stands Jesus. In between the two crowds there is a man who sees the widow, has compassion on her, and speaks to her, saying, "Do not weep." In between the two crowds there is a man who will give his body as a sacrament of mercy.

Often in between the healthy and the hurting are the healers; those who give their bodies as sacraments. Graduates, you know this already in the training you have received. Often in between the healthy and the hurting are the healers.

In a way, this whole community of Loma Linda University—the campus, medical center, church, academy, the outreach centers—this whole community can be understood as a group of healers standing between those two crowds.

Scripture says Jesus reached out and touched the stretcher that carried the dead boy. Jesus responded like Elijah of old, starting with life-altering words: "Do not weep" (like, "Do not be afraid"). Jesus was not afraid of the disease that had caused the boy's death. He was not afraid of

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the impurity of the stretcher nor the impurity of a dead body, a big deal in the first century. Without hesitating for even a moment, Jesus reached out and said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" And when the boy sat up, Scripture says that Jesus, like Elijah, "gave [the boy] to his mother."

**Christianity is a vision that a better world is possible.**

Then, the two crowds became one as all the people proclaimed: "A great prophet has risen among us!" "God has visited God's people!"

Jesus had come in the spirit of Elijah. Jesus placed his body between the boy and the powers of chaos, the powers of death itself; using his body as a way to shout "No!" to that which destroys human life.

For 108 years, the Loma Linda University campus has been challenging that which destroys human life:

Because of its prophetic vision of a better day…

Because of its prophetic vision of health and healing and hope…

Because of the vision that someday there will be no disease…

Loma Linda fights disease now.

As one of our students at La Sierra University, Sterling Spence, said in his Honors project presentation: "Christianity is a vision that a better world is possible and once we practice that vision, our entire being changes, our focus shifts and we become actively a part of trying to create the kingdom here."[5]

Every year hundreds of Loma Linda graduates complete their training and go all over the globe, continuing and expanding this prophetic vision; giving their bodies as sacraments of mercy, going toward the chaos—toward those who so desperately need life-altering words and death-defying actions.

Because of Loma Linda's graduates, widows continue to be amazed as their children are returned to their arms. Communities are restored. Nations are healed.

Crowds are stunned and glorify God, saying, "The prophetic voice is here among us!" "God has visited God's people!"

At the end of Luke's gospel, Jesus shares bread with his followers and says, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 2:19). "Do this…," and I don't think he only meant eat the wafer. "Do this, give your body in remembrance of me." It is a calling and a challenge to each of us. It is mysterious. It is a sacrament of mercy.

## Epaphroditus and the *Parabolani*

Later in the Christian movement, when the apostle Paul was in prison, a man with a strange-sounding name—Epaphroditus—visited Paul. It was a risky thing to visit someone in prison. Most prisons were underground, so you had to be lowered in from above, and you were at the mercy of the guards to get out. Because they were underground, prisons were dank, dark dungeons, with no natural light; they accumulated human waste, rats, stale air, and in some cases allowed prisoners little to no movement by chaining them to the cell wall.

Paul, in his letter to the church at Philippi, the home church of Epaphroditus, says that this

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brother "risked his life" for the work of Christ by taking care of Paul, coming very close to death himself (Phil. 2:25–30, 4:18).

I wonder what exactly Epaphroditus did for Paul. Did he clean Paul, who, if chained, would have been unable to clean himself? Did he catch an illness from the waste or the rats or the stale air? Did he get beaten by guards for insisting on something for his friend—food, water? How *did* Epaphroditus risk his life for Paul?

The verb used to describe Epaphroditus means "to risk life; to expose to danger" (Phil. 2:30), and it was a nickname later taken by Christians as a name of honor. They were the *Parabolani*—those who risk. They were known as those who cared for the sick. They performed works of mercy. They risked their own lives in caring for those with contagious diseases. They were willing to see that those who died of such diseases were properly buried. They were known as the ones who "risked their bodies on behalf of others."

But it was not just risking for the sake of risking. Two years ago I was in Queenstown, New Zealand, and I stood on the edge of the Kawarau Bridge, where "bungy jumping" (bungee jumping) began back in 1988. I watched a young man, probably in his late teens or early twenties, as the bungee cord was tied to his feet and he jumped off the bridge, screaming as he fell the 154 feet to the water below. He was the first jumper of the morning.

Personally, I cannot imagine taking such a risk just for the sake of risk. And I know some of you are saying to yourselves that there's less chance of getting hurt by bungee jumping than by driving home today on California Route 91, and you are probably right. But I'll take my chances on the 91, thank you.

The *Parabolani* didn't risk their lives just for the rush of risk. They believed in the way of Elijah and the way of Jesus. They believed in the self-sacrificial choices of Epaphroditus. They believed in sacraments—the visible sign of inward grace, and the need to respond to God's mercy by acts of mercy toward others. They believed that some things possess a sacred character, a mysterious significance. They believed in giving their bodies as sacraments of mercy.

## Loma Linda graduates in the tradition of the prophets and Jesus

And I am thinking of this year's graduates—those graduating in the School of Allied Health and the School of Public Health. As we honor our Emergency Medical Services graduates who are our first responders, those we most often think of as rushing toward the chaos—how grateful we are for you—we also remember that there are other kinds of wounds and needs and fears; not all are visible from the outside. These are cared for by a variety of healers: cardio-pulmonary specialists, radiation technicians, physical therapists, speech pathologists, health information managers and educators, medical technicians, physician assistants, nutritionists and dieticians, occupational therapists, and public health professionals.

**Mercy** ➜ **continued** *on page 44...*

**[Christians] believed in giving their bodies as sacraments of mercy.**

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*New Books and Reports on*

# ELLEN WHITE

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY VISION *by Vernon Nye, 1990* | ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE, INC.

# **Testimonies:** *An Excerpt from* Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2014) | BY GRAEME SHARROCK

On Thursday, October 8, 1857, James and Ellen White traveled by wagon from Caledonia, Michigan, south to the village of Monterey for a preaching appointment. Arriving at the schoolhouse where local Adventists were gathering, the Whites were unsure what theme to speak on, so they encouraged the believers to fill the time by singing and praying, and waited for inspiration.

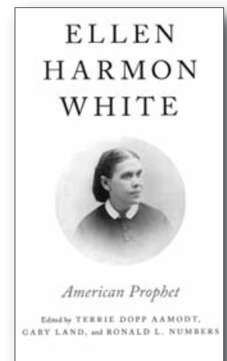
Then, unexpectedly, because her husband usually preached first, Ellen, not yet thirty years old, stood to speak and soon the meeting was "filled with the Spirit of the Lord." The feelings of the faithful quickly intensified; some were joyful, others wept. When seated again, Ellen continued to pray aloud, "higher and higher in perfect triumph in the Lord, till her voice changed, and the deep, clear shouts of Glory! Hallelujah! thrilled every heart." Ellen was in vision.

In her audience sat Victor Jones, a poor farmer and heavy drinker trying to reform his life and better care for his wife and young son. As James wrote for the church paper a few days later, Ellen delivered a "most touching and encouraging message." The man "raised his head that very evening, and he and his good wife are again happy in hope. Monterey church will never forget that evening. At least they never should."[1]

Yet Ellen did not disclose all of her vision in the meeting. Next morning she walked a mile to the nearby home of Brother Rumery, a local church leader and community pioneer present the previous evening, hoping to "speak plainly" to him. Nearing the house, she stopped and instead returned and wrote him a letter. Confident she had kept the vision confidential, she concluded with the following paragraph and sent the letter off:

> *Dear Brother Rumery, I came to your house purposely to tell you the vision but my heart sank within me. I knew my weakness and knew I should feel the deepest distress for you while relating it to you, and I was afraid I should not have the strength to do it, and should mar the work. Now brother, I am afflicted and distressed for you, and when at your house was* so burdened *I could not stay. I send this communication to you with much trembling. I fear from what I have seen that your efforts will be too weak. You will make no change. Oh, will you get ready for Jesus' coming?* I kept the vision from every one, *even my husband, but I must speak plainly to you. You must have a thorough work done for you or you will fail of heaven. Said the angel, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25).*[2]

Starting in the late 1840s, Ellen—or "Mrs. E. G. White" as readers came to know her—wrote hundreds of such personal letters, known as "testimonies," to individuals, families, and churches. From these intimate epistles, she forged an extraordinary career as a religious leader and writer of pamphlets, periodical articles, and books on topics ranging from biblical interpretation to health care, organizational development, and Christian spirituality. Although few expected to ever receive one, her testimony letters helped mold the fragmented Millerite movement into a new American religion denomina-




**The testimony letter remains Ellen White's distinctive literary signature.**

tion. The testimony letter remains Ellen White's distinctive literary signature.

Modern readers encounter these letters in nine red or black hard-bound volumes known as *Testimonies for the Church*—elegant cloth editions with corrected spelling, improved grammar, and the identities of the original recipients disguised by editors. Largely stripped of places and dates of writing, they have been read for 150 years in a deepening social and historical void. Some readers project special religious powers upon them while others have denigrated them as relics of an outmoded worldview. Clearly, the testimonies are no ordinary letters, but what are they?[3] Fortunately, more than a hundred of White's antebellum letters and manuscripts have been preserved, along with a few printed editions, accommodating research into their origins and role in early Adventism.[4]

## Testimonies: Evangelical, Millerite, Adventist

In her testimony letters, Ellen White adapted a literary and rhetorical standby familiar to the Anglo-American legal and religious traditions and rich in cultural resonances. As discourses presenting an eyewitness viewpoint, secular and religious testimonies emerged after the American Revolution as important tools of public persuasion. Whether delivered as "exhortations" in a Methodist social meeting or proclaimed in a court of law, they were customarily transcribed from oral discourses and verified by the signature of the speaker or other witnesses. Religious examples reflected the Puritan emphasis on individual experience—personal narratives, confessions of faith, signs of divine workings in the soul—linking their authority to that of the Spirit through visions, voices, dreams, and providences. Whether published as broadsides or pamphlets or in denominational periodicals, the testimonies of emerging spiritual leaders harmonized their life experience with the core narratives of Christianity.[5]

Among the Millerites of the 1840s, *testimony* carried the common evangelical meanings, along with expressions of confidence in the imminent second coming of Christ. Even finer theological nuances arose among those who followed the revisions of Millerism advocated by James and Ellen White and their circle, known as Bridegroom and later Sabbatarian Adventists. Their solution to the problem of the "Great Disappointment" (the failed prediction of the second coming of Christ, on October 22, 1844) proposed that Miller was right as to the date, but wrong regarding the event. The fateful day instead marked the start of Judgment Day—a complex event centered not on earth but in heaven. With a dramatic cast of adjudicating Father, advocating Son, accusing Satan, and angelic clerks writing names and deeds in a book, this apocalyptic scene provided an ordering framework for all aspects of human life, especially for the faithful. The very first rule for reading the Bible, claimed a writer in the church paper, was "NEVER open the Book of God, without remembering that you must be tried by it at the judgment seat of Christ." Separated from unbelieving society and formed into small "bands" as they waited for the End of the World, they "carefully examined every thought and emotion" while experiencing deep raptures of hope and love—a scene that crystallized the ideals of community found in her subsequent testimonies. With the grand audit or "cleansing" of the heavenly realm already under way, White's early testimonies reported on the progress of "cases" in the proceedings and outlined the purification of heart and life expected of earthly believers.[6]

Within a few weeks of the Great Disappointment, White experienced her first "holy vision" in which she visited heaven, talked with Jesus, and saw "events all in the future" before returning to the earth. At meetings throughout New England, she fell into trances and analyzed the spiritual condition of individuals, seeming to read into their very souls. The visions offered consolations to those stymied by the failure of Miller's predictions, conveying divine sympathy for their plight and compensating for the scorn of newspapers and neighbors. White mentioned her visions in letters to friends and family and published a few in Millerite periodicals or as broadsides with local printers.[7]

Falling into trance, having a vision, and writing it out was arduous work for a young, illness-prone, and barely educated woman such as Ellen Harmon. The process of writing gave expression to her acute moral and social sensitivities, relieving her "burdens" or intense religious feelings. "It was not until I began to have visions that I could write so anyone could read it," she wrote in a later autobiographical manuscript. "One day the impression came to me as strong as if some one had spoken it, 'Write, write your experiences.' I took up a pen, and found my hand perfectly steady, and from that day to this it has never failed me." By the time the printed version came off the press, however, the "impression" had become an angel's

voice, the "experiences" specified as visions, and taking up the pen was in response to a divine command. In this way, White reified her spiritual experiences to produce a lifetime of testimonies and other writings while remaining true to her inner world of images and voices.[8]

### How to recognize a testimony when you see one

Each year, Ellen White wrote dozens of testimonies and hundreds of pages expressing her convictions and persuading Adventists to change their attitudes and habits. Not all of her letters were testimonies, however, so how would a recipient know? Growing out of White's regular familial correspondence, the testimony letter developed over a decade into a distinguishable document with a definable structure, standard sentence types, stock arguments, and repeated rhetorical strategies. Although shorter testimonies might lack or truncate portions, the letter usually followed this order (most of the following examples are from the letter to Brother Rumery):

**Date, place of writing, and salutation.** Most addressees are readily identifiable, including those stated as "Dear Brother…," "Dear Sister …," or "Friend." Occasionally, she played with a name, displaying satire or irony such as "Victory Jones" or "Sir Emory Fisk." These formal features become standardized early in her life and rarely changed over the years.

**Occasion of writing.** The opening sentence or two linked the letter to a recent vision and announced the subject of the testimony. Reading this sentence was the recipient's first clue that he or she had received a testimony letter. "You remember the vision given last Thurs. evening," she wrote to Brother Rumery. "In that vision I saw the case of Brother Victor Jones…."

**Announcement of theme.** In a few sentences, White summarized the general topic of the testimony and identified its principal persons. She often expressed the theme as a general complaint, or as a failure to exhibit certain traits or perform certain actions. For example, "I saw that the Lord loved him [Jones] but he had reasons for discouragement . . ." she announced in the same letter. "He looked for and expected to find the same disposition in his brethren but was disappointed. They said by their profession we are pilgrims and strangers, yet their heart and treasure were here." From this summary, the remainder of the letter expanded on the themes of discouragement/encouragement, wealth/poverty, and profession/practice.

**Analysis of case(s).** Using moral language mixed with religious images and ideas, White compared her subject's behavior or spiritual condition, as she saw it, with her own moral and social ideals. "Brother Rumery, you could have in many little acts have eased Brother Jones' burden, and never felt it," she opened her analysis of Rumery's case, "but for years you have loved money better than religion, better than God." Viewing current problems as continuous with the past, she referenced her subjects' life histories in the longer testimonies. Fully developed testimonies contained extended discussion of several linked "cases" and ran ten or twenty written pages.

**Call to action.** The testimony followed analytical with prescriptive language, usually a required response mixed with the language of appeal. Most often, White used imperative forms from biblical passages—"earnestly seek the Lord," "do not become discouraged," "cleanse your heart," and so forth, but also borrowed contemporary idioms. "You must cut loose, cut loose from the world," she insisted to Brother Rumery.

**Warrants and principles.** In order to reinforce her analysis and call to action, White called upon a half-dozen commonplace beliefs. As we have seen, her readers assumed the Adventist worldview with its apocalyptic images: Judgment scenes, an omniscient deity, record-keeping angels, and the shortness of time available to humans. If she refer-

**Clearly, the testimonies are no ordinary letters, but what are they?**

enced a person's sins or secrets, readers could assume that she was accessing in her visions the life histories kept by "recording angels." She also relied on moral and social ciphers accepted by most American evangelicals, such as the ban on "worldliness"—a term whose meaning varied from group to group, but which typically prohibited amusements, frivolity, and preoccupation with material matters. "Reform," on the other hand, was code for earnest concern with personal and social change. She was steeped in the language of sentimental theology that proposed shared feelings between the human and divine realms, and salvation through transformation of the affections. In these instances, she described the feelings and facial expressions of Jesus, trusting such imagery would evoke sympathy and self-reflection in her readers.

**Appeal.** Toward the end of each testimony, White made appeals to her readers to embrace the changes she had outlined. The mature testimony frequently appealed to particular emotions: fear, hope, anxiety, love, and sympathy. The spiritual outcome most feared was to "be left to themselves," "in darkness," or "unaware" that the Spirit had left a person or church. In her most eloquent appeals, White invoked the popular evangelical trope of the sufferings of Christ in his betrayal and death on the cross, asking believers to measure their meager inconveniences against the infinite sacrifice of Christ their "Example." Accustomed to the rhetorical strategies of sentimentalist writers such as Harriett Beecher Stowe, readers viewed such appeals as encouragement to face awkward feelings or espouse unpopular causes.[9]

**Personal note.** Sometimes White added a short note of greeting, an expression of love to family members, a request for her correspondent to make a copy and return the original, or instructions regarding the reading of the letter to others. The final paragraph of her testimony to Brother Rumery explained her intense "distress" and failure to arrive at his home that morning.

**Sign-off.** The concluding phrase White commonly used in all her correspondence echoed the urgent sense of time and the supreme social value expressed in the Millerite and Adventist communities. Although sometimes abbreviated, it rarely changed over the years: "In haste and love, Ellen G. White." But to Brother Rumery she signed off, "In trial, E. G. White."

## Audiences: individuals, families, churches

Adventists lived in a transparent universe. Angels scrutinized every act and word; the gaze of believing and unbelieving neighbors was continuously on church members. "I was shown, Mary, that many idle words have fallen from your lips," White wrote to her close friend Mary Loughborough. "If the recording angel should place them before you, it would astonish, distress, and alarm you." Messages tailored to individuals were needed because humans, unable to perceive the heavenly realm—or peer into their own souls or interpret the actions of others—were oblivious to the causes and consequences of their actions. "Brother and Sister Wright . . . could have seen and understood the spirit of Sister Booth, from observation," White wrote to friends, "and if they had stood free in God could have discerned the spirit, acts, and words, and the character developed. But they failed to see." The testimonies met this deficit by mediating knowledge from hidden sources, but she expected her readers to develop the self-insight to view and correct themselves.[10]

While White wrote most often to individuals, the best of her analyses emerge in her letters to families. As young parents, James and Ellen White traveled and visited homes in New England, observing the piety, parenting styles, and domestic practices of their hosts. "I saw that our keeping house has discovered selfishness in your families," she wrote to one family in the summer of 1851, "and I saw that there has not been true faith in the visions." The two families were joined by an emotional "link" that should be "broken" because it produced collusion rather than mutual strengthening and growth in grace. Each family needed to stand more "separate" and direct their love to Jesus, if they wanted to have "vital godliness and heart holiness."[11]

Like a modern family therapist, White used her powers of moral discernment and social observation—including critical attention to stories and snippets of conversation—along with her growing experience as a parent, to craft prescriptions for a happier and holier life. When young women wrote for advice on family matters, she answered using notes from her visits and visions. Certain types and motifs appear regularly in the testimonies: the garrulous wife undermining her husband's authority; the impulsive socialite whose unthinking actions bring bewilderment to others; the hypocrisy of religiosity that covers an underlying lack of genuine spiritual experience; overly sympathet-

ic parents who fail to discipline their children; the unkempt and slovenly housewife; the minister who competes with or openly disrespects his fellow ministers; the elderly church leader who resists passing the baton to younger leadership. Just as middle-class mothers relied on Catherine Beecher's rules for cleanliness and amusements in her *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, the testimonies became the official source of rules and practices of domesticity for Adventist families.[12]

White's concern with character and influence expanded from individuals to larger units of believers, where the increased social and spiritual effect—either positive or negative—counted for or against the credibility of Adventism, especially in small rural towns where most believers lived. Testimonies for the church as a whole, usually addressing the spiritual health of the widespread body, were usually read at conferences and quickly printed in the church paper. She adapted and focused the testimony to the needs of the Adventist community, mediating between divine expectations and human capabilities while protecting the church's reputation.

### Writing: composition, circulation, reception

When Ellen White went into vision during a public meeting, associates such as James White or Hiram Edson often took notes of her utterances, which she later used to reconstruct her memory and write out her interpretation of the vision. She then addressed a letter to the subjects of the vision—a page or two up to twenty or more—describing their role in it and urging them to follow its prescriptions. A single vision, if it concerned several people or families, could generate five or ten letters, which were "circulated" to an even wider readership.

After writing, White visited the subject and read it aloud in their presence—if an individual, at his or her home; if a church or conference, before the assembly. If the recipient was not local, she mailed the letter to the named person or an associate, with instructions to pass it along to any other persons mentioned in the letter or to read it before a church gathering. Occasionally, as in a letter to the Kellogg family of Battle Creek, she waited a year or more after a vision before sending a testimony.[13]

Once the testimony was delivered, White "anxiously watched the result, and if the individual reproved rose up against it, and afterwards opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind. Did I deliver the message just as I should?" She sometimes met with and observed the person and her family, looking for signs of improvement. As she told Angelina Andrews, "I read over the testimony frequently for you and sister Mary…and inquire in my own mind, Are they living up to the testimony?" White then inquired of others to discover what Angelina had been doing about it before she calculated and sent her response.[14]

In return for the letter, she hoped for the original back, along with an acknowledgment of the accuracy of the visions and a "confession" of all wrongs. Others wrote back asking for clarification, or expressed gratitude and regret while promising to reform. Many of the surviving responses seem to follow a prescribed outline: I received your letter, I thank God that he notices me, I acknowledge my errors, I will try to do better.[15]

**While White wrote most often to individuals, the best of her analyses emerge in her letters to families.**

### Readers: believers, resisters, defenders

No one, it seems, expected to receive a testimony letter from White. Its arrival might throw its subject into a moral crisis—a person might "break in pieces" and engage in a "thorough work" by confessing wrong attitudes and surrendering to "present truth." White expected that through constant reform or "cleansing," recipients would "overcome" wrong feelings and behaviors—or expect another confrontation. Phoebe Lamson read James and Ellen's letter to John Andrews (a young scholar and minister mentored by James White) and it "deeply affected" her. "My eyes opened to our sad state…how unworthy and unprofitable we have been in the service of the Lord." Andrews, for his part, admitted that he had "expressed opinions…in some matters" that

"seemed to open the door for the prince of darkness to step in," and promised to "keep in my proper sphere"—in submission to the Whites. The testimonies became indispensable to those committed to improving themselves while maintaining social relations with the Whites.[16]

Questions about the visions arose in the reading and reception of the testimonies and became a central issue in the growing Adventist community, generating defenders and detractors. By the time the denomination was organized, many churches read White's testimonies in meeting and called for comment. Brother Carpenter read aloud and then bore his own testimony "in regard to the truthfulness of the visions respecting myself." This was followed by question time, during which Brother Breyer spoke of things "freely acknowledged by the church," and of "the faith which he had in the visions." Some were less convinced. Brother Young was "more backward" in speaking of past meetings and deferred to Carpenter to "say a few words" regarding what he knew. Carpenter completed his endorsement with confidence: "I believe," he said of the testimony, "it is true."[17]

Others, however, reacted defensively to the testimonies. More than one breakaway group cited the testimonies as evidence of Ellen White's mistaken belief in her gifts. Some organized active opposition to the Whites, citing three grounds: the visions on which the testimonies depended were spurious; the testimonies were inaccurate or false; belief in the testimonies should not be made a test of fellowship. White responded that some who "professed perfect confidence in the vision" nevertheless "found fault with the instrument" or "the manner in which the vision was delivered. They took the position that a part of it was correct and part of it was a mistake, that I had been told circumstances and thought that the Lord had shown them to me in vision." Some serial testimonies chart the Whites' efforts to maintain influence with those doubting Ellen's visions, especially those who sympathized with rival movements such as Spiritualism. Most detractors, however, resisted her diagnoses of their souls, not her theology, making the widely distributed testimonies occasions of conflict as well as conciliation among local Adventists.[18]

## Publication: editing and compiling inspiration

White's testimony letters first found their mark in the souls of her private correspondents and in the networks of local churches that read them. Starting in the mid-1850s, however, they found new readers. When James and Ellen White's conception of a community in the last days extended beyond the surviving Millerites, they enlarged their readership by publishing for a more general audience. After the installation of a hand press at Battle Creek, the Whites printed a broadside and then a sixteen-page, tract-style pamphlet (3½" by 5½" pages) based on recent visions, titled *Testimony for the Church*. Following a reading before church members in Battle Creek, "on whose minds it apparently made a deep impression," the Whites included endorsements by ministers—a common boost to women writers of the period.[19]

About once per year, James printed another pamphlet edited from a selection of testimonies the Whites believed would be of general interest to members. Aware that a series was in the making and each new issue could be had for the postage, readers made their own compilations. Sister M. E. Devereaux, who stitched books for the Battle Creek press, offered a female friend "all Sister White's visions…bound in morocco." In late 1857, for the fourth pamphlet, James increased the size to thirty-six pages and the print run to 1,500; he placed a note in the *Review and Herald* urging they be "circulated immediately." As a sample, the *Review* excerpted nine pages from the pamphlet, entitled "He Went Away Sorrowful for He Had Many Possessions," based on Ellen's vision at Monterey, October 8, 1857.[20]

In a few short years, the testimonies became *Testimonies for the Church*. Ellen continued to write out new visions in her handwriting as before, but the edited pamphlets lacked the intimacy of the personal letter. Names and places were deleted to give the impression of a more general message. In several printed testimonies, for example, we come across initials for persons, although it is unlikely that readers would not know who "J.N.A." and "J.N.L." were (well-known Adventist authors). To read of the spiritual weaknesses of church leaders in this way must have given lay readers the impression they shared an angelic viewpoint. When demand after the Civil War required that James republish the pamphlets from the 1850s, he saw in them only "matters of a local and personal character, which do not have a direct bearing on our time," but praised their "high-toned spirit of scriptural piety." His bound edition of 1871 became the standard text for following generations. Some omitted testimonies were never seen in print again, but early testimonies—or at least para-

graphs from them—showed up in later testimonies, articles, and books, as Ellen reworked and enlarged them for wider audiences.[21]

The regular publication of the testimonies increased but complicated their status among Adventists, adding an aura of inspiration difficult for the Whites to control. There is no evidence from Ellen or James White in this period, however, that the testimony letter was considered an inspired document, in the sense that evangelicals considered the Bible inspired. Certainly there was no phenomenon like the "automatic writing" exhibited by Shakers and Spiritualists in the writing of some of their testimonies. Her testimonies were literary traces of full-bodied and socially embedded revelatory experiences, not merely the recordings of a spiritual channel. Her ideas came to her mediated through images, narratives, emotions, bodily sensations, memories, and social encounters. Ellen's widely circulated letters and manuscripts contained scratchings, rewriting, and spelling and grammatical errors incompatible with any idea of verbal inspiration. James and others early resisted the idea that the visions in any way constituted an authority rivaling the Bible and refused for a number of years to publish them in the church paper. The locus of controversy, however, was the visions—and by extension Mrs. White herself—not her writings per se.[22]

Despite any flaws in the mechanics of her writing and the strong editing hand of her husband James and others, Ellen insisted on an essential role for the Spirit in the production of her writings. Her clearest statement from the antebellum period, summarizing fifteen years as a visionary, came in a letter to John Andrews in 1860. Her visions are "either of God or the devil," she insisted. "There is no half-way position to be taken in the matter." After a vision, she explained, "I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as presented in vision, and I can write freely…." Apparently, trance experience depleted her mental capacities for a period, but the very act of writing helped stimulate her memory and efficiently led to inspiration. By the late 1850s, Adventist lecturers freely distributed printed testimonies along with Bibles and "truth-filled" books that they sold for modest profit. Many had not only read a testimony but had also seen Ellen White in vision, witnessed her miraculous recoveries, and heard her speak. Along with the church paper and familial letters, the testimony letters played a special part in the "communicative network" spreading among Adventists from New England and New York to the Midwestern states and into eastern Canada. All this had a sacralizing effect, giving the testimonies special religious authority somewhere above the *Review and Herald* but below the Bible.

### Case study: testimony to Brother Rumery

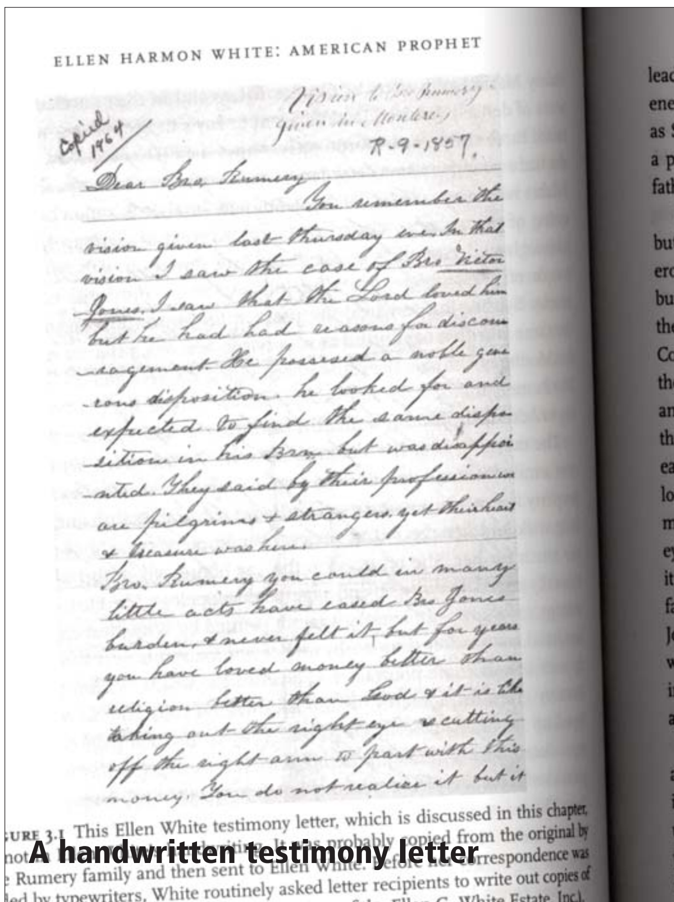
We return finally to Monterey, Michigan, and the testimony letter Mrs. White wrote and mailed to Brother Rumery because, overcome with feelings, she could not deliver it in person. This section examines the testimony in its historical and social context and considers how the testimony written in Monterey, Michigan, contributed to the life of the wider Adventist community.[23]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, as thousands of New Englanders, New Yorkers, and European immigrants pushed westward in the Great Lakes area, the Miami and Pottawatomie peoples of southern Michigan were removed from their traditional lands by a long series of treaties and forced marches. After the land to be known as Allegan County was surveyed and indexed in 1837, early purchasers (known as patentees) chose the best and highest lands with the best soils and stands of oak trees for $1.25 per acre. Within the county, Township No. 3 North, Range 13 West, located north of Allegan, attracted many farmers because of its rolling hills, well-drained and rich soils, and abundant stands of oak, beech, elm, basswood, walnut, and ash. Young adults from the township families quickly intermarried and

**Despite any flaws in the mechanics of her writing and the strong editing hand of her husband James and others, Ellen insisted on an essential role for the Spirit in the production of her writings.**

began raising a new generation. In 1847, area pioneers called a meeting to organize and name a new civil township within Allegan County. The winning suggestion, offered by pioneer Sylsbre Rumery, was "Monterey," after a recent victory in the Mexican-American War.[24]

By 1856 a church was organized at "the center of a large farming community of Seventh-day Adventists." From the church paper subscriptions list and other references, we know the names and occupations of many Adventist families, including Wilcox, Day, Lay, Clarke, Kenyon, Pierce, Russ, Wilson, Patterson, Howard, Jones, and Rumery. Before their conversion to Adventism, township pioneers such as George T. Lay, Leonard Ross, Frederick S. Day, Harvey Kenyon, and Sylsbre Rumery achieved leadership positions in the new township as


ELLEN HARMON WHITE: AMERICAN PROPHET

Copied 1964

Vision to Bro Rumery
given in Monterey
R-9-1857.

Dear Bro Rumery
You remember the
vision given last Thursday eve. In that
vision I saw the case of Bro Victor
Jones. I saw that the Lord loved him
but he had had reasons for discou-
ragement. He possessed a noble gene-
rous disposition. he looked for and
expected to find the same dispo-
sition in his Brn. but was disappoi-
nted. They said by their profession we
are pilgrims & strangers. yet their heart
& treasure was here.
Bro. Rumery you could in many
little acts have eased Bro Jones
burden, & never felt it, but for years
you have loved money better than
religion better than God & it is like
taking out the right eye or cutting
off the right arm to part with this
money. You do not realize it but it

...URE 3.1 This Ellen White testimony letter, which is discussed in this chapter, ... probably copied from the original by ... Rumery family and then sent to Ellen White. Before her correspondence was ...led by typewriters, White routinely asked letter recipients to write out copies of ...

**A handwritten testimony letter**

supervisor, clerk, treasurer, justice of the peace, and constable. Lay, the largest landowner in Monterey, with high and fertile lands, had donated the land on which the schoolhouse was built and in which Ellen White had her October 8, 1857 vision. As members pledged support for Adventist causes such as a new press for the church's printing business and the Whites' push for denominational organization, the church in Monterey quickly developed a reputation for wealth and generosity. If an exemplary Adventist community could be found anywhere, it would be the church in Monterey.[25]

Brother Sylsbre Rumery, known as "Syb," was a farmer with a growing family living in the southeastern portion of Monterey Township. Born in 1820 and raised in Lockport, New York, he moved to Allegan County in 1839, was converted to the Methodist Episcopal faith in 1840, and emerged during the next decade as an energetic community leader. In 1841, he married Nancy Maria Lay, a sister of George T. Lay, and in 1843 purchased eighty acres of densely forested land adjacent to Lay's in Section 26, where they raised three children. Unfortunately, Nancy died (December 25, 1847), but she had a younger sister Betsy Jane, aged twenty-two, who agreed to marry Sylsbre within a year (April 1, 1848). Younger brother Solomon came in the spring of 1847, was converted at a local meeting of German Methodists (although understanding no German), and stayed on with Sylsbre for a couple of years before marrying Julia A. Elliott and building a home nearby. Sylsbre Rumery held the position of township treasurer in 1856, the same year that Lay served as supervisor, and was a charter member of the Monterey Grange, the guild encouraging farmers and their families. The Rumery brothers became prosperous during the 1850s boom, converting to Adventism just a few months before the Whites' October 1857 visit.[26]

The morning after her vision in the schoolhouse, Ellen White walked over a mile west and uphill to the Rumery farmhouse, viewing the choice property in late harvest and its extensive views to the south and east. The long walk and her mounting anxiety over Rumery's case, however, were too much for her. She returned to the Lay home, where the Whites customarily stayed, to write several pages and an apology. The surviving manuscript, 1,164 words in length, was not penned by White but copied from her hand, as was her custom, by one of her assistants or a Rumery family member. At some point later, she added the words "Vision to Brother Rumery given in Monterey" to the handwritten copy and the whole was typed up "as grammatically corrected" in 1964. Except for a few excerpts, it has never been published. Like a typical testimony letter, however, it references a vision, "last Thursday eve." "In that vision," Ellen declared, "I saw the case of Victor Jones." He was the man whom

Ellen had encouraged with her message the night before, but who was he?

Victor Jones lived in a small home with his wife Elizabeth and son Frank near the large Lay farm, but with few possessions, at least in comparison to wealthier Adventists. Born and raised in New York state, like so many other Michigan settlers, he had first lived in Pennsylvania, where his son was born, before the family moved west. Rumery and Jones were each in their thirties and married, but the Rumery brothers owned sixty times the property of Jones. As Elizabeth Jones had recently published a letter in the church paper, the family was not unknown to the Whites.[27]

To supplement their income, poorer men such as Victor Jones worked as day laborers for wealthier landowners or merchants. The distinction between farmers and laborers in settler culture was so clear that, almost without exception, sons of farmers were always farmers, even if they labored for their fathers and owned no land. Whether they worked on the family farm or on another, sons and brothers were increasing their stakes in the family fortune, which was rarely true for laborers such as Victor Jones. In this patrimony system, therefore, "love of the world" meant the attendant rights of property ownership such as family security and civic leadership. The sale of such property for causes such as Adventism threatened diminishment of the family's future, especially for young men such as Sylsbre Rumery's three minor sons. Young Frank Jones, as the son of a poor man, however, might receive almost nothing from his laboring father.[28]

In the written testimony Ellen reported "that the Lord loved [Jones] but he had had reasons for discouragement." He possessed "a noble, generous disposition" and expected to find the same in his fellow believers but was "disappointed." He had seen wealthy church members profess they were "pilgrims and strangers, yet their heart and treasure were here." Compared to the typical testimony, which directly addressed the subject of the vision, Ellen here used a foil. Having announced her diverting subject and her complaint in general terms, she opened the next paragraph in the second person: "Brother Rumery, you could in many little acts have eased Brother Jones' burden, and never felt it; but for years you have loved money better than religion…." Rumery's problem was his "love of money" and attachment to his large property. "It is like taking out the right eye, cutting off the right arm, to part with this money. You do not realize it, but it is your god." He was blind to "the worth of the soul" and to be faulted for his "close dealing" with poorer church members such as Victor Jones, "making a little something out of them, taking advantage of them when you can." "God hates such things," she warned, "and every single instance wherein you are guilty is written in the book," and would "stand against" him unless he reformed.

Yet the testimony's main concern was the relationship between Rumery and Jones. "I saw that instead of inquiring into Brother Jones' wants, feeling a kindly sympathy for him," White charged, "you have coldly shut up the bowels of compassion toward him." When Rumery "embraced the present truth," Jones expected a "reformation" in a wealthy man known for taking advantage, but was instead "disappointed." In the vision, Jones' hands were "weakened and fell without strength by his side. He felt and said, 'It is no use. It is no use. I can't live religion. I can't keep the truth.'" Stumbling over Rumery's selfishness, Victor Jones had sunk deeper into his despair and his drink, and it was Brother Rumery's fault.

In White's vision, an angel had said to Rumery, "Thou art thy brother's keeper and in a degree responsible for his soul." Instead of neglecting and exploiting his fellow believers such as Jones, Ellen implored, Rumery should be a "brother's keeper," to "bind to your heart with strong Christian cords an erring, burdened brother," even "give your life for a brother" and love him. This would require "noble-hearted" and generous feelings from Rumery—remember her characterization of Jones as "noble" and "generous" in the opening sentences—and

**Falling into trance, having a vision, and writing it out was arduous work for a young, illness-prone, and barely educated woman such as Ellen Harmon.**

"every noble, generous act" would be "written in the book." This "truth" would "purge" away love of the world, or else the love of money would "crowd out all the noble principles of the soul." Reversing their relation of owner/laborer, White was implying that Jones possessed nobleness of soul that Rumery lacked. Riches were deceitful because they blind the possessor to the needs of others and to "the cause," and made it more difficult to hear "the voice of Jesus" when he called for money. God, "at present," did not call for people to sell their homes, but the time would soon come.

In her closing appeal, White acknowledged it would be hard for Brother Rumery to "deny self and take an upright, generous, noble course." He should do so, in part, because others looked for "a reformation… wrought in you by the truth." She employed a naval idiom often found among religionists of the period: "cut loose, cut loose from this world" or he would lose "heaven and its treasure." "The time has come for you to choose," she insisted.

White's subsequent feelings, not just the vision, were a key part of the testimony and of her rhetorical strategy. Near the start of the letter, she had accused Brother Rumery of a lack of sympathy; "Dear brother," she implored halfway through the letter, "in the vision God gave me as it has unfolded to my mind I have felt distressed, distressed." In the concluding personal note, she poured out her feelings, hoping to evoke his capacity to feel for others: ". . . my heart sank within me. I knew my weakness and knew I should feel the deepest distress for you while relating it to you, and I was afraid I should not have enough strength to do it…." "Afflicted…distressed . . . burdened…trembling," she "could not stay" and deliver her message: a "thorough work" was needed "or you will fail of heaven" because "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Luke 18:25." White's explanation, that her irregular behavior that morning was a result of her emotional state, was exceeded only by the disclosure that she had "kept the vision from everyone, including my husband"—a statement appearing in no other letter.

In testimonies such as the one to Brother Rumery, Ellen White seemed to chafe at the prosperity achieved by families who then passed it down to their sons, who in turn raised their families and took care of their aged parents—the accepted patrimony system. Holding wealth and investing in the family implicitly denied Adventism's central belief—was this world their home, or were they bound for another? If wealth was achieved at the expense of a poorer Christian brother such as Victor Jones, she had double reason for concern. Ellen also believed that suffering and sacrifice were essential to salvation; wealth not sacrificed would become an obstacle because it closes the heart and divides person from person. The failure of a distinguished convert and pillar of the Monterey community such as Sylsbre Rumery to exhibit compassion thereby risked his salvation and threatened the social values and influence of Adventism.

## Conclusion

Ellen White's testimony letters wielded an extraordinary spiritual power among antebellum Adventists. Based on her visions, which no one else saw and no one but she interpreted, their source was inaccessible and mysterious; they could only be admitted or ignored. For 150 years, whenever Adventists said "Mrs. White says…" they were probably quoting from one of her testimonies. Today we read them in their historical and social context and appreciate a unique religious accomplishment: the redemption of the Millerite movement's victims and their transformation into a growing community able to function in a world without end.

The testimonies are best viewed as religious texts mediating the many conflicting spiritual and social forces active in the lives of their readers. At first glance, a testimony letter in a few pages challenged its reader to examine and "cleanse" his or her life—and life records—while waiting for divine examination in the Judgment. Whether read in person, mailed through the post, sent to church leaders for congregational reading, dispersed as pamphlets, or published through the church paper, the testimonies persuaded thousands to reach for a spirituality that saw human life transparently and with feeling. As mirrors for personal reflection, they nurtured aspects of Adventist piety from Sabbath-keeping to child rearing and promoted the integration of belief and practice. In their largest range, as paradigms of community and church policy, they informed and reflected Adventism's spiritual ideals, resolved conflicting viewpoints within the church, and resisted centrifugal forces. As the Whites itinerated, they encountered local tensions such as exploitation between the wealthy and the poor in the

farming town of Monterey. In response, a testimony letter advocating "systematic benevolence" or the concept of the "worthy poor" could mediate acceptable standards of Christian community and the realities of human self-interest under patrimony culture and the emerging market economy.

The moral ideal urged by the testimonies was the serious, self-controlled, sympathetic, self-aware believer whose ordered life balanced faith and feeling, conviction and compassion, improvement and sacrifice, and reflected positively on the Adventist cause—a view of Christian perfection eminently social yet advocating self-responsibility. The community of Adventism reading the testimonies was the knitted product of believing parents and children, the aged and the young, the wealthy and the deserving poor. Families receiving White's approval practiced the headship of the husband and the supportive role of the wife, suppressed their children's passions, and shaped decorous behavior and promoted respect between younger and older generations. Similarly, the ideal church successfully negotiated the space between cold formalism and heated fanaticism, established members and new arrivals from the East and wealthy property owners and laborers. The testimonies expressed the community's difference from the larger world in personal appearance and avoidance of social fads and entertainments. In other words, in a reversal of the powerlessness of the earlier Millerites, the terms of engagement were to be set by the church, not the world.

The testimonies simultaneously addressed both the interior self (or conscience) and the social self and placed a higher value on emotion than on argument. After all, the community of the redeemed did not merely agree—they *felt* themselves to be one. What may surprise modern readers is the degree to which White relied on sentimental appeals—even sympathy for herself and her husband. In difficult cases, such as those of the Monterey church, she reached for unifying metaphors such as growth, melting, and soul education in order to transcend conflicts between loyalty and purity, wealthy and poor, the saving of the soul and the reputation of the church. ■

**The testimonies are best viewed as religious texts mediating the many conflicting spiritual and social forces active in the lives of their readers.**

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Andrews University and the University of Chicago, where he was awarded a Wabash Fellowship in Pedagogy and the Study of Religion. His primary research interest is the literary and artistic expression of religious experiences and contemporary interpretation theory. He lives in Honolulu, Hawaii where he teaches classes, invests in real estate and enjoys life island-style with his wife Noriko Motomassa, PsyD.

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1. See James White's report in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 10 (Oct 22, 1857), 219, hereafter referred to as *Review and Herald*.

2. Ellen G. White to S. Rumery, n. d. Emphasis by underlining in original. Unless otherwise indicated, White letters and manuscripts are from transcriptions on file at the Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Michigan, hereafter referred to as CAR.

3. White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948).

4. This chapter reviews handwritten, transcribed, and published letters and manuscripts from 1845 to approximately the start of the Civil War.

5. The new Webster's Dictionary of 1828 gave a dozen literary, religious, and legal examples to suggest a broad definition for testimony: "A solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact." See examples in Sasson, Diane, *The Shaker Spiritual Narrative* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 67–83; Humez, Jean McMahon, *Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson, Black Visionary, Shaker Eldress* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981); Hamm, Thomas D., *The Quakers in America*, Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Struk, Alexander, "The Hermeneutics of Testimony: Ricoeur and an LDS Perspective," *Aporia* 19:1 (2009), 45–56.

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8. Compare "Life Sketches Manuscript," (1915), 8. http://text.egwwritings.org/, search LSMS; and *Life Sketches, Ancestry, Early Life, Christian Experience, and Extensive Labors of Elder James White and His Wife, Mrs. Ellen G. White* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Assn., 1880), 90.

9. See Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrayal of slavery through the trope of the sufferings of Christ in *Uncle Tom's Cabin;* or, *Life Among the Lowly*, ed. Ann Douglas (1852; repr., New York: Penguin, 1981).

10. Ellen G. White to Mary Lyon, Jan 13, 1862; Ellen G. White to Friends at Marshall, Michigan, n. d.

11. Ellen G. White to Brother J. N. Andrews and Sister H. N. Smith, n. d. (June, 1851) [MS 9, 1851].

12. See Beecher, Catherine E., *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For Use of Young Ladies at Home*, rev. ed. (1842: New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

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14. Ellen G. White to Angeline Andrews, n. d. (ca. 1865). See also Ellen G. White to John N. Andrews, Aug. 26, 1855; and Ellen G. White to John N. Andrews, June 11, 1860.

15. S. W. Rhodes to Ellen G. White, Mar. 18, 1855.

16. Phoebe M. Lamson to James S. White, March 17, 1863; John N. Andrews to James S. White, Nov. 3, 1862.

17. William Carpenter to Ellen G. White, March 21, 1863.

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19. White, Ellen G., "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Testimony for the Church*, no. 1 (Battle Creek, MI: Advent Review Office, 1855), 31 (Burlington copy). The editions inspected for this essay came from the libraries of M. B. Miller of Burlington, Michigan, and John N. Andrews, both courtesy of CAR.

20. White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, no. 1, 16; White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, no. 2 (Battle Creek, MI: Advent Review Office, 1856), 16; White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, no. 3 (Battle Creek, MI: Advent Review Office, 1857), 16; White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Assn., 1857), 39; White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, no. 5 (Battle Creek. MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Assn., 1859), 32; White, Ellen G., *Testimony for the Church*, no. 6 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Assn., 1861), 64; *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 11 (1857): 18 (hereafter referred to as *Review and Herald*); M. E. Devereaux to Sister Below, Nov. 9, 1856 (dated Nov. 4).

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23. Ellen G. White to Rumery, n. d.

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25. Van Horn, Bert, "Early History of the Church at Monterey, Mich.," *Review and Herald* 96, no. 4 (1919): 22–24; Members of the Day family held positions of supervisor, clerk, and treasurer in the 1840s and 1850s. George T. Lay was Monterey supervisor and S. Rumery was treasurer in 1856. S. H Wilcox held both clerk and treasurer positions. See Johnson, History of Allegan County, 282–292; and "Pledges for Power Press," *Review and Herald* 24 (1857), 192.

26. See 1850 Federal Census, 1860 Federal Census, and 1864 Michigan Agricultural Census for Monterey Township. According to the 1860 Census, two Rumery brothers with their families lived adjacent: Sylsbre (40), worth $4,000, living with Betsey (33), John (15), Andrew (12), Maria (10), Horatio (8) and Lee (3); and Soloman (listed as "Silas") Rumery (33), worth $2,000, living with his wife Julia (32), Joshua (7), and Alice (1).

27. According to the 1860 Census, Victor Jones (34) lived with Elizabeth (27) and Frank (9), with property of $100. See Elizabeth L. Jones to Editor, May 31, 1857, *Review and Herald* 7 (1857): 54–55.

28. Schob, David E., *Hired Hands and Ploughboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815–1860* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 37–40.

# **Making History:** *A Review of* Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet | BY DAVID HOLLAND

This book is both symbol and substance. Perhaps in some way that is true of all books, but *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* has a special claim to both symbolic and substantive importance.

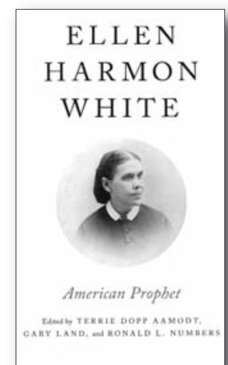
First, the symbolism. This volume, and the conference on which it is based, represent a long overdue recognition of Ellen White's wide historical significance and—by implication—a corrective to an almost inexplicable historiographical neglect. It is impossible to review this book adequately without saying something about the strange scholarly lacuna to which it symbolically speaks.

Searching for the terms "*Mary Baker Eddy* and *Christian Science*" in JSTOR—the premier digitized collection of scholarly journals—yields 446 hits. A similar search for "*Joseph Smith* and *Mormon*" returns over 2,500. The frequency of references to "*Ellen G. White* and *Adventist*" registers considerably lower at 109. Even when one searches across the permutations of White's names, combined with *Adventist*, the figures remain rather modest: *Ellen White* (101), *Ellen Gould White* (nine), *Ellen Harmon White* (six), and *Ellen Gould Harmon White* (four). Thus, although Seventh-day Adventism's membership statistics significantly exceed those of Smith's church and dwarf those of Eddy's, the scholarly literature has mentioned her at a fraction of the rate at which it has engaged the others.

The reasons for this striking disparity are easy to suppose and difficult to prove. This very volume underscores a number of them. Perhaps the imbalance stems from a denominational history in which White split credit for founding Seventh-day Adventism with her husband and Joseph Bates, whereas Eddy and Smith shared the founder's limelight with no one. Maybe it derives from the fact that such a high percentage of SDA growth has come in the global south, a region toward which too many American and European scholars have been oblivious. It possibly reflects the relative orthodoxy of SDA theology and praxis: Mormon theosis and polygamy, like Christian Science's radical immaterialism and healing, tend to demand attention in ways that sacralized Saturdays and water cures cannot quite match. If we could ask her, undoubtedly Ellen White would have her own answer for her relatively low profile among secular academics: Such is to be expected from a humanity listing toward destruction. Children of this world would always be more interested in the "agents of the great deceiver" than in the messenger of the remnant (207).

And yet there remain so many reasons why she cannot continue to lag as a distant third in the historiography of American prophets. Not least among these is that Ellen White was clearly committed to the importance of history. Her *Great Controversy* (the book she hoped would have the largest circulation of all her writings) warns of the judgment to come, but only after detailing events that had passed. Any close observer of White's prophetic career would perceive the unmistakable message that in order to accurately look *forward* one must attentively look *back*. And her people have looked back. As *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* testifies,

**The first of two reviews of:**




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

Seventh-day Adventism has generated intense historical debates and a robust community of historians. Some have left the fold, many have remained, but all bear the marks of a shared tradition in which history matters.

**Any close observer of White's prophetic career would perceive the unmistakable message that in order to accurately look *forward* one must attentively look *back*.**

Since at least the 1970s some of those historians have done the heavy scholarly lifting to begin placing Ellen White where she belongs, in the foreground of American religious history. To date, no single piece of scholarship symbolizes the fruits of their labors more effectively than the book under review here. The volume is largely the product of scholars with Adventist ties, many of its chapters written by the very figures who have dedicated their professional lives to accurate historical engagements with White. But this is so much more than an intra-denominational discourse. As the book attests, the intellectual energy generated by historians of Adventism has in recent years attracted the interest and involvement of some of the most influential figures in American religious history: Grant Wacker, for example, writes a compelling forward to the volume, while Ann Taves provides a rich chapter on "Visions." Furthermore, the 2009 conference on which the book is based drew an impressive group of participants from across the scholarly and religious landscape. The book's existence and form—published by a leading academic press, written largely by well-trained scholars with Adventist connections, drawing the attention and even the participation of American historians of various orientations and considerable renown—is as important as anything the book contains. And it contains a lot.

As an accessible treatment of White's history on an array of topics, this volume is simply incomparable. Not a reference work like Denis Fortin's and Jerry Moon's massive newly published *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, nor an integrated biographical treatment like Ronald L. Numbers' *Prophetess of Health*, the book is a collection of mostly well-crafted essays that focus on particular aspects of White's story. All of the chapters contain vital information and a number of them provide helpful analytical frames in which to make sense of a unique life and legacy. In the book's final paragraph Gary Land issues a challenge that he believed the volume begins to answer: Land felt that work on White has largely been too narrow both in terms of the aspects of her life it considers and in terms of investigating that life's broad implications for American history generally. His concluding critique establishes a pair of standards by which we might judge the book's success.

On the matter of topical breadth, the book hits Land's target: seventeen essays on seventeen separate aspects of White's history, from institution building to theological development to her views on arts and culture. Collectively, the essays testify to the remarkable range of her interests and activities. She was much more than health reform and possible plagiarism. On the matter of drawing out the implications of White's life for broader questions of wide historiographical concern, however, the book responds to Land's call more equivocally. The essays are uneven in terms of the effort they make both to situate White in a richer context and to demonstrate why she matters to larger historiographical questions. And yet the book

as a whole does indeed consistently show that time and place matter.

To that end, it is fitting that the volume contains two essays by Jonathan M. Butler—a scholar long committed to understanding White in her cultural context—including the biographical sketch with which the book opens. Butler's chapters situate White in intersecting histories of Jacksonian democracy, Victorian domesticity, Civil War cataclysm and post-war confidence. Not merely the product of her culture, nor unaffected by it, she thus proves a valuable point of comparison to the more familiar narratives of American history.

Butler is hardly alone in his contextual sensibilities. For Ann Taves, White's visionary setting was shaped by Methodism's promise of divine presence, Millerism's ability to produce a cacophony of charismatic voices, and mesmerism's threat as a rival source of visionary experience. Ronald Numbers and Rennie Schoepflin depict Ellen White's declarations on science and medicine as influenced by existing work on health and sexual reform, strongly reactive to the era's "mind healing" vogue, heavily shaped by physicalist convictions and indirectly influential on later creationist views (207). Douglas Morgan analyzes her complex cooperation with the temperance movement, her critical response to both labor organization and the capitalist oppression of the poor, and her effort throughout to eschew coercive measures and maintain her apocalyptic commitments. Benjamin McArthur's White resisted the novel-reading trends of her day and lamented the world's craze for sports, while cautiously embracing certain kinds of fictional literature and visual arts. Eric Anderson's essay on "War, Slavery and Race" is by its very nature thoroughly contextual, as it depicts her pessimistic views on both emancipation and Civil War, her controversial opinion of the government's assumption of moral responsibility, and her balance of courageous rhetoric and cautious policy in response to entrenched American racism. Similarly, Laura Vance's treatment of gender places White in a "precarious position" where she had to carve out stances that were true to her own rather radical belief that God wanted women to build the church in a variety of prominent and remunerated roles while not excessively provoking the often misogynistic culture surrounding her (279).

Other essays in the volume prove somewhat less interested in linking Ellen White to large historical themes and big historiographical questions, but even these still depict a prophet very much engaged with and relevant to her surroundings. Graeme Sharrock's essay explicitly laments the "social and historical void" in which White's testimonies have been read and observes that her visionary ideas came embedded in a nexus of "images, narratives, emotions, bodily sensations, memories, and social encounters" (53, 63). Fritz Guy's treatment of her theology, which he sees as a mix of conservative and progressive impulses, locates White in a culture of biblical literalism and anti-Catholicism. Setting her in relation to James White's Christian Connexion background, Bert Haloviak charts a fascinating shift from her early legalism to an emphasis on imputed righteousness. Ronald Graybill shows how

**Seventh-day Adventism has generated intense historical debates and a robust community of historians.**

White's prophetic persona reflected Methodist reading, drew from revelatory predecessors (including the remarkable African American prophet William Foy), and contrasted with Mormon forms. Arthur Patrick's discussion of White as "author" considers her composition and publication processes but also wrestles with the way such processes were understood by those around her. In detailing the central importance of public speaking in White's life, ministry, and legacy, Terrie Dopp Aamodt distinguishes her early efforts to speak from the elite women who lectured as reformers, placing her instead with the charismatics of the more radical religious movements. Floyd Greenleaf and Jerry Moon—considering White as an indefatigable institution builder—compare her health-focused pedagogy to the educational theories of Horace Mann and show how her view of medical education had to deal with the accreditation requirements of a newly professionalized culture. As essay after essay connects each of its themes to different aspects of White's social and cultural context, one of the most valuable benefits of the book's structure becomes apparent: a variety of authors attending to tightly-defined aspects of White's story not only give us a richer portrait of her career, but also a more nuanced sense of the world in which she functioned.

**In the world but not wholly of it, [White] acts and repeatedly refuses to be acted upon.**

Though White's relationship to her world forms something of a leitmotif that recurs (with more or less emphasis) throughout the volume, the book is still very much about *her* rather than her context. In the world but not wholly of it, she acts and repeatedly refuses to be acted upon. A review of the endnotes that follow each chapter illustrates the fact that White's own words form the bone and marrow of the book. Her voice comes through. She is the overwhelming force that shapes these stories. Ironically, that point is made particularly clear in the last three chapters, those that deal with posthumous matters. In the book's most idiosyncratic and insular essay, T. Joe Willey suggests that the unusual and secretive burial steps taken after the deaths of James and Ellen White could reflect Ellen's teachings that some elect people rise to heaven prior to the Second Coming. That her sons may have arranged her burial in accordance with these beliefs suggests that her doctrines weighed heavily on her children even after she had gone. The fierce century-long debates about her literary estate and doctrinal authority among Seventh-day Adventists, documented in Paul McGraw's and Gilbert Valentine's penultimate essay, highlight the length and breadth of the shadow she continues to cast over the church. Even here we see how context matters—as a number of her books have been revised to speak more effectively to a modern audience—but it is still her words that persist. Finally, the late Gary Land's concluding chapter on "Biographies" amply illustrates the point made earlier in this review and repeatedly by this book: History matters—really matters—to Seventh-day Adventists and to Seventh-day Adventism. And that may be Ellen Harmon White's most lasting, most important and most complicated legacy of all, a legacy to which this book bears unmistakable witness. ■

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**DISCUSSED** | Ellen White, the Great Disappointment, plagiarism, the Second Coming, Adventist eschatology, pragmatism, theology, idealism

# A Historical Inquiry: *Review of* Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet | BY DENIS FORTIN

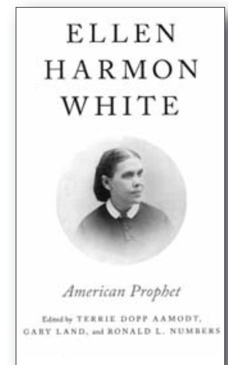
*Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* is the newest book published on Ellen White studies and is edited by three historians well-known to Adventists: Terrie Dopp Aamodt, professor of history and English at Walla Walla University; Gary Land, late professor emeritus of history at Andrews University (we are saddened by Gary's recent death on April 26); and Ronald Numbers, Hilldale professor emeritus of the history of science and medicine and of religious studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The book contains eighteen chapters that came from presentations at a conference on Ellen White held in Portland, Maine, in October 2009, on the 165th anniversary of the Great Disappointment of 1844. Most of the authors come from the Adventist tradition and a few from other religious expressions. Overall, the book is a historical inquiry into the cultural context and contributions of Ellen White's life and ministry. One of the great benefits of this new book is the interest Ellen White's life and writings are generating among non-Adventist historians, and such a book published by a well-known scholarly press is bound to generate even more interest into the role Ellen White played in nineteenth-century American religious life.

Along with two other major publications, the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* that Jerry Moon and I edited[1] and the forthcoming publication of the first volume of Ellen White's annotated letters and manuscripts from 1845–1859,[2] I am delighted to see a resurgence of scholarly works on the life and ministry of Ellen White. All three publications will generate a lot of renewed interest in Adventist history and should raise many questions to discuss in the coming years, especially as we mark the centenary of Ellen White's death next year.

Jonathan M. Butler authors the first chapter with a portrait of Ellen White and gives remarkable insights into the historical facts of White's career as he analyzes the relationship between culture and her achievements in a Victorian world. At times, however, I find he overreaches in his conclusions, as if White purposefully accomplished all she did and set out from the beginning to do so, even more so once her husband, James, had died. Nonetheless, the chapter offers a valuable assessment of the interplay between cultural influence and White's achievements.

Ann Taves' chapter on Ellen White's early visionary experiences offers a summary of the subject provided in an earlier publication, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience*.[3] Taves argues that White's early visions and experience are best understood as part of the Methodist "shout" tradition and the charismatic context in which she lived. As such, she claims that White participated in the early enthusiasm and fanaticism she later renounced and also asserts that official Adventist publications downplayed her early experiences in favor of a more acceptable description of that early history. She also explains how early Adventist history typifies the experience of new religious movements that follow a set trajectory from charismatic experiences to tem-

**The second of two reviews of:**




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

perate and ultimately more formal expressions of religious life.

In the third chapter, Graeme Sharrock gives an insightful analysis and description of Ellen White's use of testimonies as a method of communication and exhortation to believers. His structural analysis of the testimony genre is well done and provides a good basis for further study of her testimonies. Ron Graybill's chapter on White as a prophet provides a context for her prophetic gift and explores the manifestation of her gift within her family setting and relationships, and how this gift came to be accepted as a divine manifestation among Adventists.

**Overall, the book is a historical inquiry into the cultural context and contributions of Ellen White's life and ministry.**

In Arthur Patrick's chapter on Ellen White as an author, we find an excellent discussion of the issues related to the preparation of her books, with the help of her literary assistants. The longstanding issues of plagiarism and the level of involvement of her assistants in the preparation of her books are well addressed. Patrick offers a candid, honest and fair evaluation of the issues surrounding White's use of other authors and how knowledge of this practice has affected Adventists for generations.

An aspect of White's ministry seldom addressed before is Terrie Aamodt's chapter on White as a public speaker. This chapter highlights how White became a more prominent speaker in Adventism after her husband became ill and how her niece, Mary Clough, helped to publicize her appointments. White was also the builder of many Adventist institutions, as explained by Floyd Greenleaf and Jerry Moon. Both authors present good evidence to support the case that she played a major role in the development of the Adventist publishing ministry, the organization of the denomination and the development of the health and education branches of the church. Without her determined support to these institutions, the Adventist church would likely not be where it is today.

Fritz Guy's analysis of Ellen White's theology is affirming of her contributions to Adventist thought within her cultural, historical and biographical context. Guy is honest about her personal limitations, that she was more a prophet and pastor who exhorts and encourages people than a theologian who explains and interprets the faith. Nonetheless, White's theological contributions are still relevant today. This same aspect of White's theology is also emphasized in Bert Haloviak's discussion of her practical theology. Here her functional role as pastor of a community of faith sought to encourage believers in their walk with God and the development of Christian character during the various periods of Adventist growth.

Although many of the insights are not new and can be found in other earlier publications like *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*[4] and *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*,[5] Jonathan Butler's chapter on the Second Coming highlights in a fresh way the tension in Ellen White's writings and Adventist theology

between the expectation of an imminent return of Christ and having to live with and adapt to an ever-extending delay. Butler's historical and sociological portrait of Adventist eschatology is incisive, challenging, and at times too satirical to my liking. Yet I believe his conclusion that the delay of the Second Coming has become the most defining experience of Adventist theology and life is to be taken seriously.

When it comes to White's writings on science and medicine, Ron Numbers and Rennie Schoepflin examine the historical context and sources of her statements on health reform, sexuality, and science. Much of this chapter recapitulates what has previously been published in *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*.[6] Doug Morgan's essay on White's social thought addresses the issues and the interplay of her theology in relationship with other movements in her time. Her approach to social issues demonstrated the interaction of her pragmatic approach to these issues in tension with her idealism and premillennialist expectation of the soon return of Christ. Next, Ben McArthur provides the historical and cultural context for Ellen White's influence on the Adventist relationship to culture. He assesses her counsels on behavior and lifestyle and offers an honest look at the slow disregard her specific counsels have received during the last couple generations while still trying to uphold her guiding principles.

In the chapter on war, slavery and race, Eric Anderson suggests that Ellen White approached this issue also from a pragmatist perspective given her dominant belief in the imminent return of Christ, focusing on current and immediate responsibilities rather than distant prospects, and thus perhaps leaving an ambiguous legacy regarding race and intercultural relations. Laura Vance's study of White's thought on the role of women in the home, church and society highlights the uneven support she gave to many issues impacting the lives of women, but also affirmed the need for women to be involved in all aspects of the church's work. Joe Willey's brief chapter on White's death and burial is the one that surprised me the most. Before reading this chapter I thought I knew most anything about Ellen White. I was humbled to find out that there are unknown things and anecdotes about Ellen White that will surprise the most knowledgeable among us. I won't spoil the content of this chapter by revealing its fascinating facts.

The last two chapters address how people have perceived Ellen White and her writings before and since her death. Paul McGraw and Gil Valentine provide a stimulating appraisal of her legacy among Adventists and how her writings came to be viewed as inerrant and infallible in spite of an official position to the contrary. Gary Land ends the book with an excellent analysis of the historical context of the various biographies that have been written about Ellen White.

I appreciated reading this book and found it engaging. However, this is not a common book about Ellen White, of the kind that would be published by an Adventist press. And while the content and analyses it provides will likely upset many believers in Ellen White's prophetic ministry, it is nonetheless a valuable assessment of her ministry and writings to provide the basis for further conversations about her enduring relevancy for Seventh-day Adventists. The chapters are not all evenly written or as challenging, and some are needlessly caricaturing Ellen White and her world. All this is to be expected of a book of essays. I also found the use of sources uneven and disappointing in many chapters where references are missing, or incomplete, or simply inaccurate. But beyond these technical matters, a few overarching themes and ideas about Ellen White's writings and influence stand out in my mind after reading this book.

**I learn from these essays that Ellen White was a pragmatic woman, intent on guiding her church and people to prepare themselves for the imminent return of Christ.**

First of all, I learn from these essays that Ellen White was a pragmatic woman, intent on guiding her church and people to prepare themselves for the imminent return of Christ. Her pragmatism, often overriding her idealism

and long-term foresight, was in constant conversation with her ardent premillennialist convictions. Thus what often influenced her counsels regarding an issue was her belief that time was very short, that Jesus would return very soon, and that therefore one did not need to create needless tension in society or in the church to prove or push an idealism that would not be needed anyway in the short run. Thus she could counsel accommodation for segregation of the races in the south in the 1890s, or accommodation with Sunday-law advocates of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, or call for the involvement of women in all aspects of church and society without joining the suffrage movement. Inasmuch as the imminent return of Christ was an overwhelming motif in her ministry and in the practical guidance she provided the young Adventist church, on the other hand, the current delay of the Second Coming is causing Adventists to rethink and readjust their responses to various issues that were not foreseen and planned for. Now Adventists have to live and wrestle with the results of temporary accommodations that have *de facto* become permanent.

**Ellen White's books are the most cherished legacy of her ministry, yet how she wrote and prepared them remains a constant matter of conversation.**

Ellen White's books are the most cherished legacy of her ministry, yet how she wrote and prepared her books remains a constant matter of conversation and criticism. Regardless of the fact that Ellen White claimed not to have read any other authors on health reform or various theological views before she wrote about her own views on these subjects, historians tend to accept the genuineness of this claim less and less. As more and more evidence mounts regarding the similarity of her views to that of other authors, her claim that she received these views directly from God is for many people becoming harder to believe. If this issue of plagiarism remains a complicated one for the Adventist church today, it may be in part because Adventists have not been totally forthright in acknowledging her dependence on other authors. Perhaps a more transparent explanation of how Ellen White composed her books would help to dispel accusations of plagiarism, but at the same time this would likely require a reinterpretation of how her inspiration is understood and how her authority is perceived.

Many of the essays in this book support the overall idea that over a seventy-year ministry Ellen White changed, matured and developed her understanding of various subjects. Not that she intended or set out to do this, but a very long life and ministry, the practical nature of her ministry, and the ever-expanding access to so many of her writings lead many historians to conclude that as Ellen White clarified some concepts and teachings in her later years, she abandoned others. It is therefore a constant challenge to adequately interpret her writings, to place them in context and to seek a better understanding of the practical principles she sought to instill for a church that is now vastly different from the one she left.

In conclusion, I will echo Jon Paulien's comments in *Ministry* (May 2014)[7] that this book will not please everyone and may in fact offend some readers. Many American history enthusiasts will recall John Adams' quip to a jury in Boston in 1770: "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictums of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."[8] Any interpretive work about an author or church leader such as Ellen White is bound to combine historical facts with ideas and opinions, and in the end present a portrait of this person that may more or less resemble the reality. Ellen White has now been dead for almost one hundred years and her legacy is just beginning to be studied by non-Adventist scholars. What they will find is likely to be more or less different than what Adventists are familiar or comfortable with. In the end, though, we hope that the historical facts of her life and ministry will be related accurately without the filters of "our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictums of our passion." But such a call for integrity and hon-

esty in the analysis of Ellen White's contributions is also the responsibility of Adventist historians. This work I believe falls in that category and will stimulate further conversations about Ellen White's legacy and role within Adventism and I am grateful that scholars outside the Adventist tradition are now willing to look at Ellen White and her contributions to American religious history. ■

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8. See McCullogh, David, *John Adams* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 68.

**Feedback ➔ continued** *from page 6...*

effectively relate to soldiers, patients and clergy from other denominations. I am indebted to those three instructors who not only challenged me, but led me through the turmoil of those challenges to a solid foundation for my belief in the role and function of the Bible. It should be noted that without the accreditation of the Seminary, I would never have been allowed to become a federal chaplain.

I had very limited contact with Dr. Vick as he was away at Oxford for a major part of the time that I was a Seminary student. In my opinion, as Dr. Weiss says, orthodoxy was not his problem. He probably was more conservative than he was understood to be. Rather I saw him as communicating on a language level that was above that of which many of the Seminary students were comfortable. Yes, he probably felt that the words he used had nuances that were important. Those nuances were probably not well understood by many of the students and were therefore subject to confusion.

I agree that the attitude of incoming students played a major role in how they adjusted to the Seminary. I am reminded of a student who sat with me in a class with Dr. Horn. He shared with me that he was getting nothing from this class that would be of value in his future ministry. As a result, he asked his conference president to allow him to leave the Seminary and enter "real ministry" of converting people to Christ. I was dumbfounded that he found nothing of value in Dr. Horn's class. He left that Seminary at the end of the term as his wish was granted.

Gregory Matthews
*Longmont, Colorado*

**Editor's note:** Gregory Matthews has just retired a second time with fifty years of service to God (The SDA Church) and country. This service had included twenty-plus years in the U.S. Army and service as a VA chaplain.

**Correction:** The image of Siegfried Horn that accompanied Herold Weiss' article about the Seminary showed a contemporary man by the same name, not the Siegfried Horn who taught at Andrews University in the 1960s.

**This book will not please everyone and may in fact offend some readers.**

**Mercy** ➻ **continued** *on page 21...*

At the heart of the vision that is Loma Linda University, health ministry is not about making money or establishing one's reputation. Instead, it calls for risking one's own self, caring for the bodies of others; giving your bodies as "sacraments of mercy." It is a very intimate, messy, and mysterious thing. It is sacred.[6]

Graduates, family members and friends of graduates, church family members: there are too many widows gathering sticks at the gates of our cities. They cannot find justice there, so they gather what they can, preparing for their last meager meal. They do not have access to our health care system. We probably will never meet them if we aren't intentional about it. But those living in the tradition of the prophets—in the tradition of Jesus and in the tradition of Loma Linda—must go to the gates of our cities and meet the widows, offering life-altering words and death-defying actions.

**This is a community with people willing to risk their lives…**

The last book of the Christian scriptures gives a vision of a world made new: a place where tears are wiped away; a place where "death [is] no more"; a place where "mourning and crying and pain" are no more; a place where everything is brand new and all the nations are healed (Rev. 21:4–5, 22:2). These too are life-altering words, part of the vision that has shaped this university and this church from its very first day of classes and worship services over a century ago.

This is a community with people willing to risk their lives by looking at the powers of chaos and disease and death and courageously say, "No!" This is a community of people placing their own bodies between the healthy and the hurting, making of their bodies "sacraments of mercy."

Jesus said, "This do, in remembrance of me." Amen. ■

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Union at Berkeley, and a master's from Andrews University. Her recent publications include "The Book of Revelation" in *The Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, Joel Green, ed. (Baker Academic, 2011), and *Signs to Life: Reading and Responding to John's Gospel* (Signs Publishing, 2013).

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3. Bovon, François, "Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke" 1:1–9:50, *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 268-270.

4. For additional connections between these stories see Green, Joel B., *The Gospel of Luke (New International Commentary on the New Testament)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 289–293.

5. Spence, Sterling, "The Restless Pilgrimage: Where the Community and the Christian Collide" (presentation of bachelor of science thesis, La Sierra University, Matheson Hall Riverside, CA, 2013), 90.

6. The second baccalaureate service, held at 11:45 a.m. on the same day, at Loma Linda University included these words reflecting the students present:

*And I am thinking of this year's graduates—those graduating in the School of Nursing and the School of Behavioral Health and the School of Religion. As we honor our nursing graduates who are often our first responders, those we most often think of as rushing toward the chaos—how grateful we are for you, we also remember that there are other kinds of wounds and needs and fears, not all are visible from the outside. These are cared for by a variety of healers: counselors, family sciences specialists, psychologists, social workers, theologians, and ethicists. At the heart of the vision that is Loma Linda University, health ministry is not about making money or establishing one's reputation. Instead, it calls for risking one's own self, caring for the bodies of others; giving your bodies as "sacraments of mercy." It is a very intimate, messy, and mysterious thing. It is sacred.*

**DISCUSSED** | American slave history, African American history, the Millerite movement, Ellen White, racism, Methodism, William Foy

# "They lived near the bridge where we went over": *Ellen White and Blacks* | BY BENJAMIN BAKER

Ellen White and race was the subject of Benjamin Baker's 2011 Howard University dissertation. In this article he begins an occasional series on the topic for *Spectrum*.

Ellen Gould Harmon was born sometime around November 26, 1827, in Gorham, Maine, to Robert and Eunice Harmon. The Harmons were married on July 11, 1810, and had a total of six daughters and two sons, the last being the fraternal twins Elizabeth and Ellen. Robert (1786–1866) was an entrepreneur who dabbled in the usual pursuits of the day: agriculture, real estate, and apparel. Eunice (née Gould, 1787–1863) was a teacher and homemaker with a penchant for flower gardening.[1]

A virtual cult of possibility that Ellen White had black ancestry, in large part due to her facial features, developed in the last decades of the twentieth century. This is not solely a posthumous observation, for *The Minneapolis Journal* stated in 1888 that Ellen White had " a peculiar dark, swarthy face, a low brow and thick lips."[2] Speculation has also been fueled by the absence of an image of her mother, and a sole extant photograph of her father. White's activism for black causes in her senior citizen years clinches the certainty in some minds that White was black.

There have been three genealogical studies of Ellen White's ancestry. The first, done in 1920 by White's relative Artemas C. Harmon, traced Robert Harmon's ancestry. The second, by Alice Soule, a professional genealogist,

**A virtual cult of possibility that Ellen White had black ancestry… developed in the last decades of the twentieth century.**

"Portland, Maine, U.S.A." by W.A. Hatton (1854)

COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The earliest extant image of Ellen White, here with husband James (1857)

COURTESY OF THE ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

White's activism for black causes in her senior citizen years clinches the certainty in some minds that White was black.

charted Eunice Harmon's line and was completed in 1983. The third was commissioned in 2000 by the Ellen G. White Estate in response to growing claims of White having black ancestry. Roger Joslyn, then president of the American Society of Genealogists and highly esteemed in the field with expertise in northeastern United States genealogy, conducted the research. All three of these studies concluded that Ellen White was of Anglo-Saxon origin, her ancestors arriving from England to New England in the early seventeenth century. White was not black.[3]

No research has been done on the influence Robert and Eunice Harmon had on the racial views of their daughter Ellen. In fact, not much research at all has been done on White's parents, primarily due to the paucity of references to them in her corpus. It is not even known where they are buried. However, aside from the safe assumption that, being Mainers, Methodists, and later Millerites, the Harmons were also anti-slavery, it is known that on several occasions Robert Harmon took his daughter to hear a black Millerite minister speak on his visions, and that Harmon apparently had no problem with Ellen socializing with the man and his wife.[4] This despite the probability that the local newspaper was referring to the black minister when it derisively editorialized that "the Millerites of the city have recently imported a great bull nigger, who has been rolling up the white of his eyes, showing his ivory, and astonishing the good people by his dreams and prognostications."[5]

The Harmons moved to Portland, Maine's capital and largest city, around 1832. While the vast majority of African Americans were enslaved at the time, young Ellen here encountered free blacks. An international commercial seaport and land transportation depot, Portland began commerce with the Caribbean when Britain lifted its trade restrictions in 1830. The industry that made Portland prosperous was largely dependent on black dockworkers, either

descendants of slaves or recent Caribbean immigrants. The Harmon family lived on Portland's Clark Street for years, within walking distance of the cosmopolitan wharves.

It was while walking home from school one day in the fall of 1837 that Ellen was severely injured when an irate girl hurled a stone that connected with her nose. Scores of pages have been written on this incident, so it will not be dwelt on here except for two points. First, this is the most formative event of White's youth, the starting point in the autobiographical sections in her writings and one that receives the most print space. Second, it was from the traumatic aftermath that Ellen began her Christian conversion process; developed an unusual sensitivity to the plight of the suffering and marginalized by experiencing it firsthand; and gained a great appreciation for the education that she was now incapable of receiving. These developments would undergird her relationship to black people throughout her life.

## Religion

***Methodism*** From this injury at age nine to the end of her life, religion would be Ellen White's magnificent obsession. Born to Methodist parents, she inherited a faith tradition with strong ties to blacks. The denomination's founders, John and Charles Wesley, were ardent abolitionists, outspoken against their native England's lead role in the African slave trade. John Wesley experienced American chattel slavery firsthand in his brief but pivotal stint in Georgia from 1736–1737, and would strike a moral blow against the institution in his influential tract *Thoughts on Slavery*. Ellen lauded Wesley frequently in her writings as an ideal Christian pioneer, and he particularly influenced the way she viewed American slavery and the manner she went about condemning it.

One person integral in establishing a Methodist presence in Ellen's home city was a black minister named Samuel Snowden (c. 1765–1850). A former slave in the South, Snowden was once a member of Ellen's Chestnut Street Methodist Church and pastored in the Portland area before her birth. He was a significant abolitionist and activist, adroitly using his stature as a minister to assist escaped blacks and establish the Underground Railroad throughout New England, most notably Portland and Boston. "Father Snowden," as he was known by both whites and blacks, was pastor of the May Street Church in Boston when William Foy had his second vision there.

***Conversion*** The biggest religious influence of Ellen's youth was Millerism. First hearing William Miller in March 1840 in Portland, White marks Miller's preaching as the impetus of an intense period of spiritual struggle that resulted in a thorough conversion. She writes about this time at length, and besides being an invaluable look into her early life and a moving religious coming-of-age account, it articulates clearly White's view of herself and God.

Ellen grappled with the notion of a God who burns sinners eternally in hell. This idea caused her no end of torment, and she shrunk away from a Heavenly Father who was such a tyrant. Her personality is a relief to her conception of God; instead of wishing to inflict suffering she conveys a keen sensitivity to all things living. In writing about this period she presents herself as an early teen that identified with the suffering and the outcast and with a unique ability to trace the effects of oppression, whether it was oppression of ideas, religions, institutions, governments, or individuals.[6] The most significant breakthrough of her life up to that point occurred when she discovered that God was a "kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant."[7]

White now had a Heavenly Father of love and grace who placed an inestimable value on human souls, wishing to save instead of destroy. She referred to her fellow humans as "souls." This was no anthropological fancy; White valued people because she believed that the Godhead invested their most valuable resources to save them from a doomed plight. Each person's soul belonged to God and God alone; his, White

**No research has been done on the influence Robert and Eunice Harmon had on the racial views of their daughter Ellen.**

would often state, "both by creation and by redemption"—and should be valued and appreciated accordingly. White's anthropological system brooked no hierarchies, castes or divisions; each human was equal in the eyes of God.

***The Millerite Movement*** The Harmons were expelled from their church family, the Chestnut Street Methodist Church, on September 2, 1843, for their refusal to relinquish Millerite beliefs. At that point the Millerite Movement effectively became Ellen and her family's religious home.

Millerites were decidedly antislavery and abolitionist, but with a unique twist.[8] The issue of slavery was not central among Millerites—although it was indeed important for many Millerite ministers, Joshua Himes chief among them—because the Millerite worldview was unapologetically otherworldly. It held that investing energy and resources on resolving earthly problems was pointless, and worse, faithless, for Christ's second coming was the "fountainhead" of all reforms, the ultimate culmination of abolitionism. As William Miller himself remarked at an American Anti-Slavery Society meeting he attended in 1840, "The poor slave has but little chance to be liberated by these two parties….God can & will release the captive. And to him alone we must look for redress."[9]

**The Millerite movement was welcoming to blacks and attractive to them.**

The fact that the Millerite Movement was primarily a northeastern United States phenomenon is crucial to this mindset. Slavery was an abstraction to most Millerites: they did not personally encounter slavery, or the challenges other denominations faced from the often-vicious reaction of white masters when their slaves were converted. Although the Millerite movement was signally ordained of God, it failed in its collective oversight that Jesus could come without giving the millions of captive blacks below the Mason-Dixon line a chance to hear that message and prepare themselves. Unfortunately, the mindset that Jesus would terminate black slavery at his second coming and that therefore the Gospel did not need to be preached to blacks would prove stubborn and pervasive among Miller's heirs, the Seventh-day Adventists. It directed the church's thinking until the emancipation of the slaves in 1865 and then engendered an informal hands-off policy toward evangelizing blacks that lasted into the twentieth century.

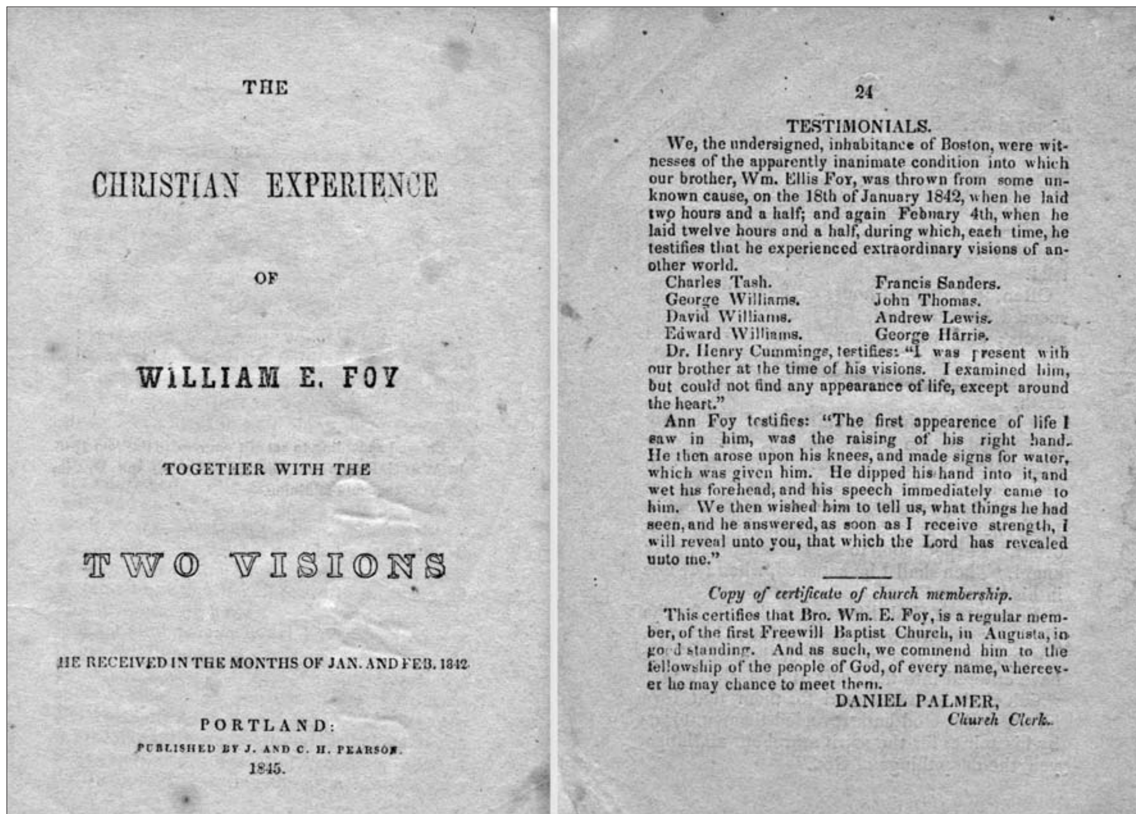
Nevertheless, the Millerite movement was welcoming to blacks and attractive to them. Not only were outspoken black leaders like John W. Lewis and Sojourner Truth active in the movement, but William Still and Frederick Douglass gave William Miller a sympathetic hearing. The most prominent and educated black ministers in the big cities on the East Coast took up Millerism, and although the slaves could not be reached, the top leadership fully supported proclaiming the message to free blacks that could be reached.[10]

## William Foy

It was in the apocalyptic atmosphere of Millerism that Ellen White met William Ellis Foy.[11] Born just north of Augusta, Maine, to free African American parents in 1818, William Foy was baptized at seventeen and shortly after was married to a woman named Ann. The Foys had their first child, Amelia, in 1837, and moved to Boston in 1840 so William could study to obtain Episcopalian clergy credentials and enter the ministry. It was in Boston that he embraced the teachings of William Miller, although he was initially averse to an imminent *parousia*.

On January 18, 1842, during a prayer meeting at the Twelfth Street Baptist Church in the heart of Boston, the twenty-three year-old Foy was "immediately seized as in the agonies of death," lost his breath, and felt his spirit separate from his body. For two and a half hours an angelic guide gave William a tour of heaven and hell, which he later described in arresting language at once majestic and awful. While he was in vision, ten eyewitnesses, including a physician, testified that they could "not find any appearance of life [in Foy], except around the heart."[12]

Weeks later on February 4 at the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Beacon Hill


THE

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

OF

WILLIAM E. FOY

TOGETHER WITH THE

TWO VISIONS

HE RECEIVED IN THE MONTHS OF JAN. AND FEB. 1842.

PORTLAND:

PUBLISHED BY J. AND C. H. PEARSON.

1845.

24

TESTIMONIALS.

We, the undersigned, inhabitance of Boston, were witnesses of the apparently inanimate condition into which our brother, Wm. Ellis Foy, was thrown from some unknown cause, on the 18th of January 1842, when he laid two hours and a half; and again Febuary 4th, when he laid twelve hours and a half, during which, each time, he testifies that he experienced extraordinary visions of another world.

| | |
|---|---|
| Charles Tash. | Francis Sanders. |
| George Williams. | John Thomas. |
| David Williams. | Andrew Lewis. |
| Edward Williams. | George Harris. |

Dr. Henry Cummings, testifies: "I was present with our brother at the time of his visions. I examined him, but could not find any appearance of life, except around the heart."

Ann Foy testifies: "The first appearence of life I saw in him, was the raising of his right hand. He then arose upon his knees, and made signs for water, which was given him. He dipped his hand into it, and wet his forehead, and his speech immediately came to him. We then wished him to tell us, what things he had seen, and he answered, as soon as I receive strength, I will reveal unto you, that which the Lord has revealed unto me."

*Copy of certificate of church membership.*

This certifies that Bro. Wm. E. Foy, is a regular member, of the first Freewill Baptist Church, in Augusta, in good standing. And as such, we commend him to the fellowship of the people of God, of every name, wherever he may chance to meet them.

DANIEL PALMER,
*Church Clerk.*

**Above: The cover and back of William Foy's pamphlet (1845)**

neighborhood of Boston, William Foy again went into vision, this time for twelve and a half hours. The young black man beholds a scene from the final judgment, and is subsequently escorted to paradise. At the close of the vision Foy's angelic guide tells him that he will help him declare to the world what he was shown. "I will go," is Foy's response.[13]

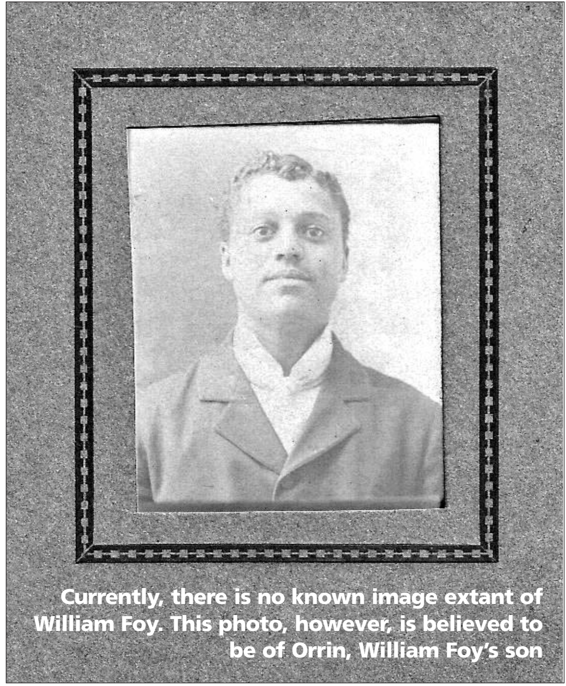
This was easier said than done. "The message was so different—and the manner in which the command was given, so different from any I had ever heard of, and knowing the prejudice against those of my color, it became very crossing," Foy later wrote. "These questions were continually arising. Why should these things be given to me, to bear to the world, and not to the learned, or to one of a different condition from myself? But no peace could I obtain in disobedience. 'Woe is me if I declare not these things,' rested heavily upon my soul."[14]

Despite his color, youth, and the fact that he had learned to read just several years before, William Foy did honor his promise to the angel. John Loughborough, in the first history of Seventh-day Adventism, describes Foy as an "eloquent speaker" whose "visions bore clear evidence of being genuine manifestations of the Spirit of God." He writes of Foy:

> *Having a good command of language, with fine descriptive powers, he created a sensation wherever he went. By invitation he went from city to city to tell of the wonderful things he had seen; and in order to accommodate the vast crowds who assembled to hear him, large halls were secured, where he related to thousands what had been shown… When dwelling on the tender, compassionate love of Christ for poor sinners, he exhorted the unconverted to seek God, and scores responded to his entreaties.*[15]

But all of this did not come without hardship. As he anticipated, Foy was persecuted, and aggressively, if the aforementioned editorial about the "great bull nigger" is any indication. In touching language Foy shares what got him through: "They [the visions] have been a great consolation to me, in seasons of temptation and trial. Often, in the silent hours of the night, I have seemed to hear again, the sweet song of the

**In Ellen White's advocacy for black causes in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century, William Foy's example was summoned.**



Currently, there is no known image extant of William Foy. This photo, however, is believed to be of Orrin, William Foy's son

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**Harmon literally had a front row seat to witness William Foy in living color witness *despite* his color.**

angels; and whenever my heart has felt sad and lonely, the things shown me by the angel, have lifted me above the trying scenes of earth."[16]

In mid-1842 William Foy and his family moved to Ellen Harmon's hometown of Portland. Sixty-five years later in an interview with her personal assistant, Dores E. Robinson, White, just shy of eighty, recalled rather specific details about the Foys, like that "they lived near the bridge where we went over to Cape Elizabeth," which would have been very close to the Harmon home. She reminisced that her father would take her to Cape Elizabeth on a sleigh to hear Foy lecture in Beethoven Hall. When Ellen heard Foy there she sat near the stand because of respiratory difficulties that were aggravated in closer proximity to others. Sitting by Ann Foy, she witnessed the dynamics between husband and wife while he spoke, and after she was privy to their conversation. "He was a very tall man, slightly colored," White said of Foy. "But it was remarkable testimonies that he bore."[17]

In the summer of the year that Jesus did not come, William Foy had two more visions. In one he was shown three "steps of fire" leading to a pathway that entered into the city of God. Multitudes stood on the steps, some advancing upward, others disappearing from view; those who remained on the third step entered the city. The contents of Foy's fourth and final vision are lost to us.[18]

Shortly after the Great Disappointment, William Foy collaborated with two fellow Millerite brothers, John and Charles Pearson—as friends of James and Ellen White, their father John, Sr., would introduce James and Ellen to each other—and published a pamphlet titled *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy together with the two visions he received in the months of Jan. and Feb. 1842*. Ellen Harmon possessed a copy of the pamphlet.[19]

"The power of God" first came upon Ellen Harmon at the home of one Elizabeth Haines in Portland in late December 1844. Now known as the "Vision of the Narrow Way," its contents are similar to William Foy's third vision. In fact, when she shared it in a public meeting near Cape Elizabeth, Foy was in the audience, listening intently. Ellen White remembers:

> *I had an interview with him. He wanted to see me, and I talked with him a little. They had appointed for me to speak that night, and I did not know that he was there. I did not know at first that he was there. While I was talking I heard a shout, and he is a great, tall man, and the roof was rather low, and he jumped right up and down, and oh, he praised the Lord, praised the Lord. It was just what he had seen, just what he had seen. But they extolled him so I think it hurt him, and I do not know what became of him.*[20]

Among other things, Ellen Harmon learned from William Foy how to be faithful to the divine mandate to prophethood in an antagonistic and even hostile society. Foy braved deep misgivings about his race, age, and education, while White was too young, too sickly, insecure, and of an oppressed gender. Harmon literally had a front row seat to witness Foy in living color witness *despite* his color. Through the persecution he obeyed God in the lonely role of seer, in stark juxtaposition to the example of Ellen's ill-fated brother-in-law, Hazen Foss, who also received visions but declined the prophetic commission after calculating the

scorn he would face if he shared them.

In Ellen White's advocacy for black causes in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century, William Foy's example was summoned. Like Foy crossing the prophetic Rubicon by opting for courage instead of cowardice, Ellen White declared in a speech to General Conference leaders in 1891 titled "Our Duty to the Colored People:"

> *After my severe illness one year ago, many things which the Lord had presented to me seemed lost to my mind, but they have since been repeated. I know that which I now speak will bring me into conflict. This I do not covet, for the conflict has seemed to be continuous of late years; but I do not mean to live a coward or die a coward, leaving my work undone.*[21] ■

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19. See "Interview with Mrs. E.G. White," 2.

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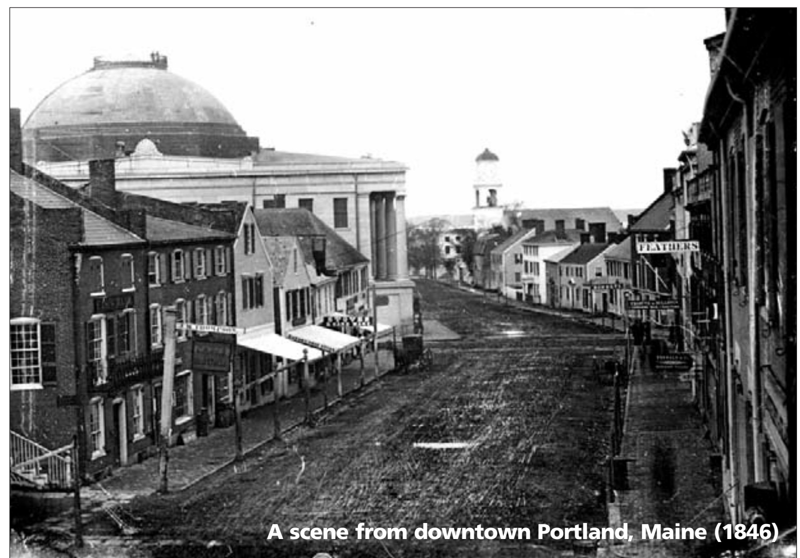
**"The power of God" first came upon Ellen Harmon at the home of one Elizabeth Haines in Portland.**




A scene from downtown Portland, Maine (1846)

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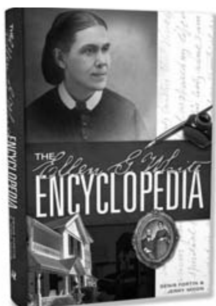
**DISCUSSED** | Victorianism, idealism, Archilochus, Ellen White, history, historical-*non-critical* method, context, academia

# The Hedgehog, the Fox, and Ellen G. White: *A Review*

BY JONATHAN BUTLER AND RONALD L. NUMBERS

**The first of two reviews of:**



*The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013)

The 1,465-page hardcover edition of the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* weighs 3.4 pounds; it is hefty enough to serve as a bookend in any library alongside the Ellen White books and other SDA selections; and it represents another impressive Adventist history offering from the Review and Herald Publishing Association. The front cover displays a profile of the forty-something year-old prophet that could be the most flattering image ever taken of her, and this copy is actually an engraved version of it that flatters her even more. Though the portrait dates from around 1875, it reflects the fashion of the 1840s, when she was a teenager. Her hair, meticulously combed against her scalp, parted razor-perfect in the middle, and gathered in a loose bun in the back framed a wide face and a dreamy, ethereal expression. Early Victorian women's fashion favored an open, expansive face through which an unblemished character could reveal itself; it was fashionable to look like White did in this photo, and it was even the fashion for her to exude spirituality. If a picture on the cover of this book is worth the roughly two million words inside, the designer picked the right picture. For on page after page of the *Encyclopedia*, the face of the prophet that emerges is less like that of a candid photo than an artist's rendering, less raw realism than an affected idealism, less earth than heaven.[1]

Casting about in this volume—as one tends to do with an encyclopedia rather than reading it straight through from beginning to end—anyone interested in the Seventh-day Adventist past, or White's crucial part in it, will find it a surprisingly good read. The lengthy, substantive essays that begin the volume will hold the attention of Adventist readers, and so will the shorter, informative, biographical, and topical entries that make up the bulk of the book. The serious reader, however, will soon detect that this is very much an *in-house* study of White, written *by* Adventists and *for* Adventists. In fact, by *in-house* we mean the product not so much of Adventist academia as a whole but a segment of it represented by the Adventist Theological Seminary and its graduates. This is not the prophet as she was so much as the prophet as the *Encyclopedia* wants her to be. That does not mean it should be relegated to a decorative bookend. Buy the book, but *"let the buyer beware."* Read the book, but *read it critically*.

That said, in the preface of *Encyclopedia*, the editors sound more like historians than believers when they declare their purpose for the book: "Beyond providing ready access to much information about Ellen White, we hope that by our systematizing present knowledge this work will stimulate a new wave of interest in and research about this influential leader and writer of the nineteenth century" (14). In an interview for *Focus: The Andrews University Magazine,* however, the *Encyclopedia* editors indicate that the Adventist prophet requires special handling by historians; she is not just another historical figure. Though they wanted to be "honest and candid," they approached her "from a faith-based perspective." Selecting authors that "fit our philosophy," they hoped to be "truthful" and "non-apologetic as far as possible." But White was "inspired of God." This meant that the *Ency-*

*clopedia* needed to adopt a certain "tone" that was "first of all, friendly toward" her. For the contributors to this landmark book, then, White may be an "influential leader and writer of the nineteenth century," but she is also exponentially more than that. They are not naïve enough to try to prove this as historians; they believe in her as a prophet as a matter of fact. And this affects the way they write history. As a result, the *Encyclopedia* certainly will not undercut belief, or even alter it all that much, but will instead buttress belief in the Ellen White we have always known but would like to have known better.

The in-house nature of *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* begins with its co-editors, Denis Fortin, former dean and professor of theology, and Jerry Moon, a church historian, both of them teaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University. Altogether there are 182 contributors to the *Encyclopedia*, and they generally fit a profile. By and large, they are denominational teachers and administrators, including employees of the Ellen G. White Estate. A number of them were Seminary-trained at Andrews University, mostly students of George Knight. The volume is dedicated to Roger W. Coon (a shirt-tail relative of Ronald Numbers) who devoted much of his career to writing on the life of Ellen White. But the *Encyclopedia* channels the spirit of Knight, a professor of education at Andrews University who belatedly migrated into the field of church history, writing extensively on Adventist history. The *Encyclopedia* was, in fact, his brainchild back in the late 1990s, but his retirement limited him to a contributing editor role for the volume. Only thirteen of the contributors were trained as historians at secular universities. Only one of them is a non-SDA, a deceased Advent Christian scholar.

What results, then, is a book that adopts the *veneer* of the historian; it *looks* like history. But it is not the kind of history we expect to read about Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln or Eleanor Roosevelt. In the jargon of biblical scholarship, it is not so much the historical-critical method at work but the historical-*non-critical* method. There are some notable exceptions to this: historians who write entries that all the contributors might have done well to emulate. To mention just a few examples among many: Brian Strayer on the "French Revolution" (one among twenty-one essays by him); Douglas Morgan on the "United States in Prophecy" or the "Civil War"; Dennis Pettibone on "Church and State"; Michael Campbell (who writes most of the unsigned biographical entries) on "Ecstatic Experiences"; Gary Land on the "Holy Flesh Movement"; Kit Watts on "Women's Issues"; Benjamin McArthur on "Games and Sports"; and Jo Ann Davidson (a biblical scholar trained at Andrews) on "Beauty." To point out that the *Encyclopedia* is believer's history by no means discredits it as a whole. This volume makes a valuable contribution to Adventist studies and particularly the study of Ellen White. The editors of *Encyclopedia* and its contributors deserve to be congratulated for a book that will appeal, within Adventism, to a popular audience but serve its academics less well. It needs, however, to be understood for what it is and for what it chooses not to be.

From 1970 to the early 1980s, Seventh-day Adventists underwent a historiographical revolution that left them with a very different Ellen White in its wake from what the church had long known. Since that major shift, played out frequently in the pages of *Spectrum*, a new apologetics has sought to pick up the pieces. The old apologetics of F. D. Nichol and LeRoy Froom, which had defended the church against outside critics, was no longer adequate in the face of historical challenges within the church. Most notably seen in the prolific historical writings of Knight, along with several of his more industrious students, the new apologists have been heavily influenced by the earlier revisionism, whether or not they acknowledge it. Where the new apologists incorporate the revisionist history in their arguments, they typically conceal their indebtedness; when they are faulting the revisionists, they identify whom they have in mind.

They spin the revisionist history, however, for their own purposes. As long as history bolsters faith, it is useful. But when history—or a particular historian—establishes a critical distance from White, then that is going too far. By and large, the *Encyclopedia* therefore finds itself far less comfortable with the revisionist history of the 1970s and early 80s (Numbers, Donald McAdams, Walter Rea) than in the new apologetics since then (Knight, Moon, Campbell, Woodrow Whidden). In the contributors chosen to write the entries, and in the way the entries are written, the *Encyclopedia* tends to concede as little as possible to the revisionist history, ignores as much as possible, and reacts negatively to the rest.

Nowhere in the *Encyclopedia* is the apologetic stance more conspicuous—to the point of caricature—than in the essay by Jud Lake and Moon on "Current Science and Ellen

White: Twelve Controversial Statements" (214–240). Instead of their labored, even tortured, efforts to rescue White from some serious misstatements, they would do better to concede that *she was at times wrong*. For supporting evidence of White's inspiration, Lake and Moon rely heavily on Don McMahon, a physician, and Leonard Brand, a biologist, for their view of how the prophet drew on her environment (236–37, notes 19, 21 and 29). In a truly bizarre application of probability theory to White's statements, McMahon showed that there was only one chance in 1.4 times $10^{25}$ (for the mathematically challenged, that's 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or ten septillion) that White could have chosen her health-reform message so presciently—which clearly demonstrated her divine inspiration. To help readers visualize this, McMahon abandoned all connection with reality and said this probability was like a chicken plucking a grain of rice out of a pile of wheat that would cover Australia to a depth of fifty miles.

Unfortunately for his illustration, if every distinct health-reform teaching were represented by a grain of wheat, together they wouldn't even fill a tea cup much less cover Australia or the U.S. fifty miles deep.[2] The other entries on medicine and science suffer from many of the same flaws as the Lake-Moon essay: a shocking ignorance of historical context, mistakes aplenty, and often an apologetical tone. A notable exception is Warren H. Johns' excellent article on biblical chronology.

The *Encyclopedia* that results from the new apologetics brings to mind the fragment from an ancient Greek poet Archilochus: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Philosopher Isaiah Berlin divided a number of writers and thinkers into these two categories, either foxes or hedgehogs. Foxes might include Aristotle, Erasmus, Shakespeare or Joyce; hedgehogs would be Plato, Dante, Pascal or Proust. (Butler may be more of a hedgehog and Numbers more like the fox, but of course, as historians, we want to be both.) Berlin then turned to Tolstoy, who he could not comfortably label as either one. He concluded that Tolstoy possessed the talent of a fox, which accumulated many little things, but the Russian novelist believed that he ought to be a hedgehog, driven by the big idea. In a way, the *Encyclopedia* seems caught in Tolstoy's dilemma. It gathers a great deal of information and wants to do so as historians do it. But at the same time, it believes in the one big thing—that Ellen White is the one true prophet for our time—so that nothing the fox gathers should disturb the hedgehog's vision. Reading through the *Encyclopedia*, one sees impressively industrious foxes at work. But behind it all lurks a hedgehog that "knows one big thing."

Poring over the *Encyclopedia*, the foxes will find many tidbits of information to interest them. Reading Knight, for example, one learns that White wrote mostly letters, articles, and sermons; her staff turned them into books. In effect, then, all of her books were compilations (126). She wrote 50,000 pages of letters. E. S. Ballenger rejected the inspiration of White's *Testimonies* because she wrote that there were forty rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium when there were actually thirty-eight (217). White's paternal grandfather was named "Daniel," the namesake of the biblical figure after whom her visions were patterned (399). The twenty-seven-year-old Anna Phillips, a self-proclaimed prophet who believed she was to be White's successor, was adopted by Jesse Rice, who was thirty-five (499). White is credited with the saying that you should live "as though you had 1,000 years to live, and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow." But Shaker prophet Ann Lee actually made that remark (609). The notorious "Z File," which consisted of about one hundred letters focusing on "the sins of erring leaders," tantalized researchers for decades because they were off-limits to them. They have now been released into White's general correspondence and are well represented in *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (1989), one of White's more popular compilations (1295).

These factoids dug up by the foxes may have broader implications for the hedgehogs. Why did Harmon experience visions so similar to those of the prophet Daniel? Were there factors in her cultural and religious background, besides the pervasive influence of the Bible, that prompted her visions? How typical was Ballenger in holding White to such specificity in her *Testimonies*? Where did he get his view of inspiration, and was White at all responsible for his ideas? How hands-on was White in the literary production of her own books? Was she herself more the hedgehog than the fox when it came to her publications? Anna Phillips Rice apparently did not measure up as a successor to White, but why was it that no one else seemed to qualify, according to White? When she said that, after her death, "my writings will constantly speak… as long as time shall last," she clearly intended to silence any future prophetic voices in the church. But why? Historians—biog-

raphers—face the huge challenge of sorting through countless facts and organizing them into an interpretive scheme that fits these facts.

Ultimately, the fox and the hedgehog need to get along. The "one big thing" that interests the interpretive hedgehog about White is this: how *human* was she? This single overarching question, however, subdivides into any one of three different questions. First, how did her *context* affect her as a prophet? Second, what sort of *change* occurred in her life and writings? And finally, in what ways did she possess an exemplary or flawed *character*? The three C's—context, change, and character—cannot be discreetly separated from one another. Whatever aspect of White's life becomes the focus, they inevitably interweave themselves. But how the historian deals with them—how the *Encyclopedia* does—tells us as much about White's biographers as it does about White herself.

With regard to context, most of the *Encyclopedia* writers fail to demonstrate White's immersion in her milieu. They are well-versed in her writings but far less conversant with the history of her era. Ironically, they stand too close to the person to see her clearly. There is a rich and voluminous historical literature on White's world. But throughout much of the *Encyclopedia*, nineteenth-century American society and culture, technology and science, morals and religion receive, for the most part, only the dilettante's passing glance, if any notice at all. It is as if the *Encyclopedia* writers took the train across America, with White on the seat next to them, but only viewed the land—her land—out a small window, whizzing by.

Instead of this kind of historical "tourism," the *Encyclopedia* needed the in-depth expertise of more professionally trained historians. Why were so many of them excluded from the project and even left out of the recommendations for "further reading"? In his bibliographical essay, Burt identifies the most obscure historical sources written by Adventists, but seems unaware of the non-Adventist scholarship on White, such as Ann Taves on White's visions, Laura Vance on the prophet and gender, Paul Conkin on her cultural importance, David Holland on her continuing revelations relative to a closed canon, and Robert Fuller on White and the body. There are historians at the margins of Adventism, or beyond it, who seem ostracized from the volume despite major contributions to Adventist historiography. To ask about them alphabetically, whether as writers or as reading recommendations, where is Eric Anderson, Roy Branson, Ronald Graybill, Bert Haloviak, Ingemar Lindén, Donald McAdams, William Peterson, Rennie Schoepflin, Graeme Sharrock—or Butler and Numbers? F. D. Nichol, though seriously dated, is constantly cited. Graybill, in contrast, seems to have been outlived by Arthur White. It is hard not to infer an *ad hominem* element in this. There may be a "political correctness" here that the editors needed to consider. But it may also be past time, academically speaking, for the "shut door" to crack open and let in more of the outside world.

When the historians go missing, it changes the kind of history that gets written. On the critical Shut Door issue, for example, White's Camden vision showed that the prophet, as late as 1851, had taught that the door of salvation was shut for non-Millerite Christians, and she based this on a vision. The White Estate view is that the written version of this Camden vision was spurious, but the best history on it upholds the genuineness of the document. The *Encyclopedia* sides with the White Estate.

On the important matter of White's use of nineteenth century historians, the *Encyclopedia* leaves the question to a biblical scholar. Michael Hasel, a professor of Near Eastern studies, unsuccessfully takes on Donald McAdams, a European historian, who found that White had made "errors in historical detail regarding John Huss" (868). Here Hasel defends White, who happily left the details of history to the foxes; she saw herself as a hedgehog with a grand vision of the Great Controversy.

The second "C"—change—can be seen as change for the better; it can also be construed as problematic. While development in the

**The serious reader will soon detect that this is very much an *in-house* study of White, written *by* Adventists and *for* Adventists.**

prophet's life and writings may be lauded as "progressive revelation," it also may be faulted as inconsistency and self-contradiction. She once said this; now she says that. Here's a quotation on the law, but there is one on grace. At first she says to build the Health Reform Institute; then she says to tear it down. She "saw" a Chicago building, and it never existed. One hedgehog may argue for an open-minded prophet who serves as an open-ended source of revelation. Another hedgehog may insist on a tradition-bound prophet who testifies to the changeless nature of God's truth. Historians, who are used to dealing with real human beings, expect to dig from the foxholes of information evidence of change, even when it means change for the worse to some.

Not surprisingly, the writers of this *Encyclopedia* are more comfortable with consistency than contradiction in their prophet. Where they see change, they want to view it as positive development. Based on his prolific writings elsewhere, Whidden proves ideally suited to write entries on the humanity of Christ and the plan of salvation. But the hedgehog in Whidden minimizes the change regarding White's view of Christ's humanity. In fact, he concludes, "There appear to be no significant development factors in her understanding of the subject. Her major contributions were evident right from the beginning" (693). The White quotations on Christology that he uses to support his thesis, however, turn out to belie it. Nearly all her best written statements on the nature of Christ come from the 1890s. But Whidden still takes White's word for the fact that on Christology and salvation she had undergone no significant change in her thinking, writing, or preaching. He believes, then, that in the 1850s she had never been more law-oriented than she was in the 1890s; the early White had certainly not been legalistic in contrast to the later White. Rather, throughout her life, she had consistently preached—*according to her*—the "matchless charms of Christ." Where Whidden does admit to development in her thought on salvation, he explains that this is not from "error to truth," but a move "from simple, more childlike expressions of truth to greater clarity and sophistication."[3]

On White's writing generally, Knight acknowledges development in a way Whidden is reluctant to do, but he prefers the later White to the earlier one, where Whidden tends to see just one White. In the final analysis, however, there is little difference between Knight and Whidden. Both of them idealize the prophet, which is true for most of the *Encyclopedia* writers. In this case, that means White's own characterizations of her theology or writings are taken at face value. Neither historian ever really cross-examines her critically, disagrees with her, or finds fault with her. One key reason that Knight favors White's later writing is because she herself does. "*The Great Controversy* rivals *The Desire of Ages* as being Ellen White's most important work," Knight believes. "Ellen White said that she appreciated it 'above silver and gold'" (126). Despite Knight's preference for these works—and White's, too—why should they be preferred to her earlier writings? In *Seeking a Sanctuary*, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart take the opposite view. They recognize that, in the 1890s, "a much more sophisticated writer appears, concerned not with narrative details but with moral exhortation." They favor her earliest work, however, which "shows an intense awareness of the dramatic potential of narrative that is obscured by the sentimental tone of her later works."[4] The earlier work, too, is clearly more her own than her later writing is.

The final "C"—character—may be the most sensitive and potentially tendentious of the three C's. Nearly four decades ago, in his preface to *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, Numbers took issue with Arthur White on whether a historian could assume, before beginning research on the visionary health reformer, that White "as a sincere, dedicated Christian and a prophet…would not and did not falsify."[5] Numbers did not dispute that this could be the case. But he could not presuppose it *before* researching her life. He could only conclude it *after* he had done his work. But this created quite an uproar at the time. However iconic the figure, however great the contribution, however many lives the person has touched for the good, we still need to know what sort of person he or she was when the public was not looking—when the fellow citizens or fellow church members had their backs turned. What kind of parent was the historical figure, or spouse, or sibling, or stranger? How did the private life correspond with the public rhetoric, the inner spirituality to the sermon preached? Historians want to know, not because they are unpatriotic, or misanthropic, or faithless, but because they are *historians*.

To press the character question is perhaps the most difficult of the C's for the *Encyclopedia* writers because White is not just a religious icon for Seventh-day Adventists but a family member, not only a prophet but also a spiritual mother. Surgeons should not operate on a family member; they are too close emotionally to function at the highest level professionally. It may be just as tough for the historian

to write a good biography of a family member, and in a sense, the vast majority of these *Encyclopedia* writers are relatives of the prophet.

If you read the *Encyclopedia* carefully, you will look in vain for a single instance when Ellen White was wrong about anything. The editorial deletions on the Shut Door in no way reflected on her integrity. She had not read Larkin Coles on health before writing out her own vision on the subject, just as she insisted. (In fact, it does not merit comment in the *Encyclopedia*.) In her *Testimonies*, she had never misread a situation or maligned a person without warrant. Because God had asked her to deliver critical *Testimonies*, the recipients had occasionally rejected her; they had blamed the messenger. Her critics had never been right about her. Her marital problems with James White had been his fault, not hers. She had no shortcomings as a mother, though James had been a problem for his son Edson. Her claims as a writer were above reproach. D. M. Canright and Fanny Bolton had been all wrong about her literary practices. The Battle Creek physicians—John Harvey Kellogg in particular—had been harsh, politically motivated skeptics. In short, she was never on the wrong side of a doctrinal issue, a personal quarrel, a political squabble, or an institutional struggle.

For the writers and editors of this *Encyclopedia*, that lovely, dreamy engraving of her from the 1870s—the Victorian woman of unblemished character—shines through on every page because that is the reality for them. They stand so close to her that they cannot see the blemishes; she is just too personally and spiritually compelling. The foxes find what the hedgehog wants them to find. ■

**While development in the prophet's life and writings may be lauded as "progressive revelation," it also may be faulted as inconsistency and self-contradiction.**

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**DISCUSSED** | diversity, Ellen White, Calvinism, theology, the manuscripts of Ellen White, patience, Adventist history, the Bible

# An Astonishing Chorus of Adventist Voices:

## *A Review of* The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia | BY ALDEN THOMPSON

We must… not only strike the iron when it is hot but make the iron hot by striking."[1] In my early years, that 1886 Ellen White quote was my motto.

Now that I am old, an 1872 quote is my guiding star: "We must go no faster than we can take those with us whose consciences and intellects are convinced of the truths we advocate. We must meet the people where they are… In reforms we would better come one step short of the mark than to go one step beyond it. And if there is error at all, let it be on the side next to the people."[2]

*The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* is an astonishing publication that illustrates the appropriateness of that 1872 quote. Why? Because the current Ellen White scene is a zoo, and patience is the word.

Not only does this issue of *Spectrum* feature two reviews of the *Encyclopedia*, but also two reviews of *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, a 2014 Oxford University Press publication edited by Terrie Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers. But there's more. While working on my articles for the *Encyclopedia*, two other publishing events amplified the tumult. Reflecting deep loyalty to Ellen White, *The Remnant Study Bible* was published by Remnant Publications in 2009.[3] Thirty named contributors—including Doug Batchelor, Kenneth Cox, Herbert Douglass, and Clifford Goldstein—submitted their favorite Ellen White quotations to be inserted in blue into the text of a red-letter NKJV.

The second event was the report on a survey of student attitudes toward Sabbath in the *Collegian*, the student newspaper at Walla Walla University (May 13, 2010). With some 330 students responding, one question was: "Which of the following hold some authority in your decision-making process?" From the list provided, family and personal experience got a ninety percent response, the Bible eighty percent, and Ellen White twenty-two percent. That confirmed a comment from one of my students that same year: "It almost bothers me how you have collected such powerful, insightful, and balanced quotes from Ellen White. I always am wondering why nobody else seems to notice the things… Never until WWU have I read or heard of a helpful Ellen White." Further to the right are those who revere Ellen White but despise the church;[4] one step more takes us to the Calvinist ex-Adventists who reject both Ellen White and her church.

So given this wild mix, how far does the *Encyclopedia* go in meeting the needs of the church? In my view, it goes a long way. The two editors, Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, both on the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, and their associate Michael Campbell from the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) in the Philippines, are to be commended for a clever strategy—whether intentional or intuitive—to meet a wide range of needs.

Conceiving the project in the late 1990s, George Knight turned it over to Fortin and Moon while still making himself available for consultation. Though intended to be accessible to both Adventists and non-Adventists, the book is primarily for believers. Those who want a clinical disclosure of the "human" Ellen White will be disappointed. But it is an excellent book for believers, both conservatives and progressives. The key, in my view, is the use of signed articles. In recent years, many "official" church voices have turned away from the kind of Adventist pluralism that marked the mid-century publication of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*.[5] The *SDABC* listed contributors, but did not link them with the biblical books on which they commented. Some material was excellent, some marginal and hastily done. But the *SDABC* consistently laid out the full spectrum of Adventist views on a particular book or issue.

That method is hardly possible anymore because the dominant mood of the church has turned monolithic. But the *Encyclopedia* bucks the trend and uses signed articles. In

my view, the parameters of the church are best defined by diverse but loyal Adventist authors who write and sign their names. That's what we have in the *Encyclopedia*.

Major articles were assigned to trusted stalwarts in the church. The more progressive stuff is there, too, but more subtly. An interview article of Fortin and Moon in the Andrews University *Focus*[6] says as much. When asked about the diversity of authors, Fortin mentions Douglass, Gerard Damsteegt, and Gerhard Pfandl, "known to be strong conservative Adventists." At the other end of the spectrum, he notes, are "very faithful Adventists" – but he gives no names. Except for short pieces written by the editors, everyone signs their articles, regardless of stripe. That's good.

The 1,465 pages of the *Encyclopedia* contain a wealth of information. After the list of the 183 contributors, the preface and abbreviations, nine "General Articles" appear, four of which I find particularly interesting: a biographical sketch of Ellen White by Moon and Denis Kaiser (Andrews University, seminary PhD candidate); a bibliographical essay by Merlin Burt (Andrews University, Center for Adventist Research); a piece by Jud Lake (Southern Adventist University) and Moon, with the intriguing title: "Current Science and Ellen White: Twelve Controversial Statements." Originally prepared by the late Roger Coon, to whom the book is dedicated, Tim Standish (Loma Linda University, Geoscience Institute) and Campbell have assisted with the editing. The final article is by Fortin, "The Theology of Ellen White."

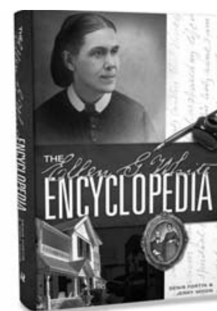
Two major alphabetical sections follow, one biographical, one thematic. Four appendices conclude the book: White's genealogy, a chart showing relationships between her early books, a list of her letters, and a list of her manuscripts, the last two indicating if a letter or manuscript has been published and if so, where.

The editors were impeccable in editing the three articles I wrote: "Ellen White's Use of Bible Translations" (three columns); "Ellen G. White's Finances" (twelve columns); and "Prophets and Kings" (two columns). Writing about Ellen White's finances was an eye-opening experience for me. My initial version was three times longer than requested. The editors cut it down from 6,000 words to 3,800, which is fair enough. But part of what went missing was the "contradictory" stuff. In 1868, for example, she urged an egalitarian wage scale for minister, editor, and physician (*Testimonies for the Church* [*T*] vol. 1, 640). But in 1885 she argued that it might be necessary to pay a competent press manager "double the wages" of the press foremen (5*T* 414). That same tendency to avoid sharp contrasts crops up in the Ellen White biographical sketch. For example, Ellen White's alarm at her mother's interest in the non-immortality of the soul is quoted from 1*T* 39: "'Why, mother!' cried I, in astonishment, 'this is strange talk for you! If you believe this strange theory, do not let anyone know of it; for I fear that sinners would gather security from this belief, and never desire to seek the Lord'" (*Encyclopedia* 28). But her 180-degree shift on hell is not mentioned in that connection: "The errors of popular theology have driven many a soul to skepticism, who might otherwise have been a believer in the Scriptures. It is impossible for him to accept doctrines which outrage his sense of justice, mercy, and benevolence; and since these are represented as the teaching of the Bible, he refuses to receive it as the word of God" (*The Great Controversy* [*GC*], 525, 1888, 1911).

Similarly, when discussing the General Conference of 1901, the life sketch omits two of Ellen White's most vivid statements: "All who are educated in the office of publication should see there exemplified the principles of heaven. I would rather lay a child of mine in his grave than have him go there to see these principles mangled and perverted." And, "That these men should stand in a sacred place to be as the voice of God to the people as we once believed the General Conference to be,—that is past."[7] The article by Ross Winkle (Pacific Union College) on the "Voice of God" is nicely balanced. But the life sketch avoids the sharp contrasts.

Turning to a special interest of mine, I want to

**The second of two reviews of:**




*The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013)

**Though intended to be accessible to both Adventists and non-Adventists, the book is primarily for believers.**

explore the role of what I have called "Adventism's Classic Statements on Inspiration," the "Introduction" to the *GC*, pages v–xii (1911) and *Selected Messages* (*SM*), vol. 1, pages 15–23 (1958). I included these statements in two of my books: *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers*,[8] and *Escape from the Flames: How Ellen White grew from fear to joy and helped me do it too*.[9] While the "Introduction" to the *GC* has been available since 1888 (in a form that differs slightly from the 1911 edition), the 1*SM* statement only became readily accessible in 1958. The *GC* "Introduction" is helpful, declaring that "men who differed widely" in "mental and spiritual endowments" wrote the Scriptures (page vi). But the really striking quotations are in 1*SM*. In particular, I doubt if I would have written my book *Inspiration* if it hadn't been for three quotations:

1. "Everything that is human is imperfect" (20).
2. "Men will often say that such an expression is not like God" (21).
3. "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired but the men that were inspired" (21).

Debate over the 1*SM* document was triggered by William Peterson's 1971 *Spectrum* article on Ellen White's literary sources in which he argued that Ellen White had not only borrowed Calvin Stowe's language but also his "ideas."[10] David Neff disagreed, showing that Ellen White significantly modified Stowe's ideas in several instances.[11]

My interest here, however, is not sources, but the great difficulty Adventists have had in making peace with the content of Ellen White's revision of Stowe as published in 1*SM*. In *Inspiration* I had noted the sharp contrast between Ellen White's 1886 statement about inspired "men" and M. C. Wilcox's 1911 statement affirming that it was not the "person" who was inspired, but "the God-breathed Word."[12] While I had cited the publication gap between 1911 and 1958, I had not then realized that Ellen White had never used any part of her Stowe revision while she was still alive. It is numbered and dated: Ms 24, 1886. But all its finely-tuned phrases simply lay stillborn in the White Estate until Elmshaven scribes began copying White's manuscripts in the 1930s. Of all people, it was *Review* editor F. M. Wilcox who became eager to get the manuscript out to the church. I say "of all people" because Wilcox was uneasy at the 1919 Bible Conference, gently but firmly resisting the more moderate positions propounded by General Conference president A. G. Daniells. Concerned that Ellen White's authority might be undermined, Wilcox frankly stated his classroom philosophy: "I believe there are a great many questions that we should hold back, and not discuss." "I can not conceive that it is necessary for us to answer every question that is put to us by students or others."[13]

That is the Wilcox who brought Ellen White's Ms 24, 1886 (her revision of Stowe) to the church. According to Tim Poirier at the White Estate, the manuscript was released on September 29, 1943, published in *Ministry* in February and March 1944, and added by Wilcox to the 1944 edition of his book *Testimony of Jesus*. I find it almost uncanny to compare the 1934 and 1944 editions.[14] The new chapter includes this almost deadpan introduction to Ms 16, 1888 and Ms 24, 1886: "The following statement by Mrs. E. G. White, on the inspiration of the Scriptures, presents a safe foundation for the Christian's confidence in God's Holy Word."

In 1951, F. D. Nichol included the two manuscripts as an appendix to *Ellen White and Her Critics*.[15] Finally, in 1958 it was published for the whole church in *Selected Messages*, vol. 1.[16]

How much of that can be gleaned from the *Encyclopedia*? Very little. Even the article on Wilcox cites only his 1934 book, not the expanded 1944 edition. But by reading between the lines, we can see how the *Encyclopedia* is continuing the gentle tradition of bringing the more liberating—and more frightening—Ms 24 to the attention of the church. And I believe we must admit that Ms 24 is liberating to some but frightening to others. I will confess that I was startled when I first read the opening chapter on "The Word of God" in the Ministerial Association's book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe… A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*.[17] To my amazement, the chapter quotes a paragraph from Ms 24, but omits two key lines: 1) "*God as a writer is not represented*"; and 2) "*It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired but the men that were inspired.*" I felt like I had just purchased a car that was missing the engine! This is the same book that initially omitted all references to the all-important preamble to our Fundamental Beliefs, the preamble that declares: "Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language to express the teachings of God's Holy Word." I was equally astonished at that omission. It has since been added to the front matter.[18] But the truncated form of Ms 24 remains.

Something similar happens in the *Encyclopedia*. An eleven-column article on "Revelation and Inspiration" is signed by Frank Hasel (Bogenhofen, Austria), one of the contributors to the Adventist Theological Society's *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*, a collection of essays responding to *Inspiration*.[19] His conservative credentials are unquestioned. In his article, he, too, quotes from Ms 24, but omits the words here given in italics: "The Bible is written by inspired men…*but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God as a writer is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen not His pen. Look at the different writers.*"

But here the editors have done us a great service by giving us the full statement. By providing diverse perspectives, they produce an impressive Adventist panorama. I am reminded of one of Ellen White's most powerful diversity statements, the one describing the need for a variety of Bible teachers in our schools. "Different teachers should have a part in the work," she argues, "even though they may not all have so full an understanding of the Scriptures." She goes on to apply the same argument to the diversity of Bible writers: "Why do we need a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, a John, a Paul?" she asks. "It is because the minds of men differ." The same applies to speakers: "One dwells at considerable length on points that others would pass by quickly or not mention at all. The whole truth is presented more clearly by several than by one."[20]

In the article by Lake and Moon, "Current Science and Ellen White: Twelve Controversial Statements"—rooted in a document originally prepared by Coon—I was struck by the remarkably open attitude towards issues of inspiration, one that seemed at ease with the views that Ellen White expressed in Ms 24. At the end of the first paragraph under the heading of "Infallible God, but Fallible Prophets," appears this statement: "For a thorough, biblical exposition of this topic, see "Revelation and Inspiration." But when one turns to the article, something remarkable has happened. Hasel has signed off with his name, but then under the same heading of "Revelation and Inspiration" comes a major insertion with this introduction: *"Ellen White's Statements on Revelation and Inspiration*. Two statements have come to be regarded as Ellen White's most significant ones regarding the inspiration of the Bible and of her own writings." Without additional comment but in bold face type, the *Encyclopedia* prints the full statements: the *GC*, pages v–xii and *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pages 15–22.

**By providing diverse perspectives, [the contributors] produce an impressive Adventist panorama.**

In dealing with my submissions, the editors consistently allowed me to approve whatever they did with them. They made revisions, but with my full approval. Apparently the editors sensed that the church should see the full documents from the pen of Ellen White. But they respected Hasel's convictions on the matter, so included the documents after his signature, but still under the heading of "Revelation and Inspiration."

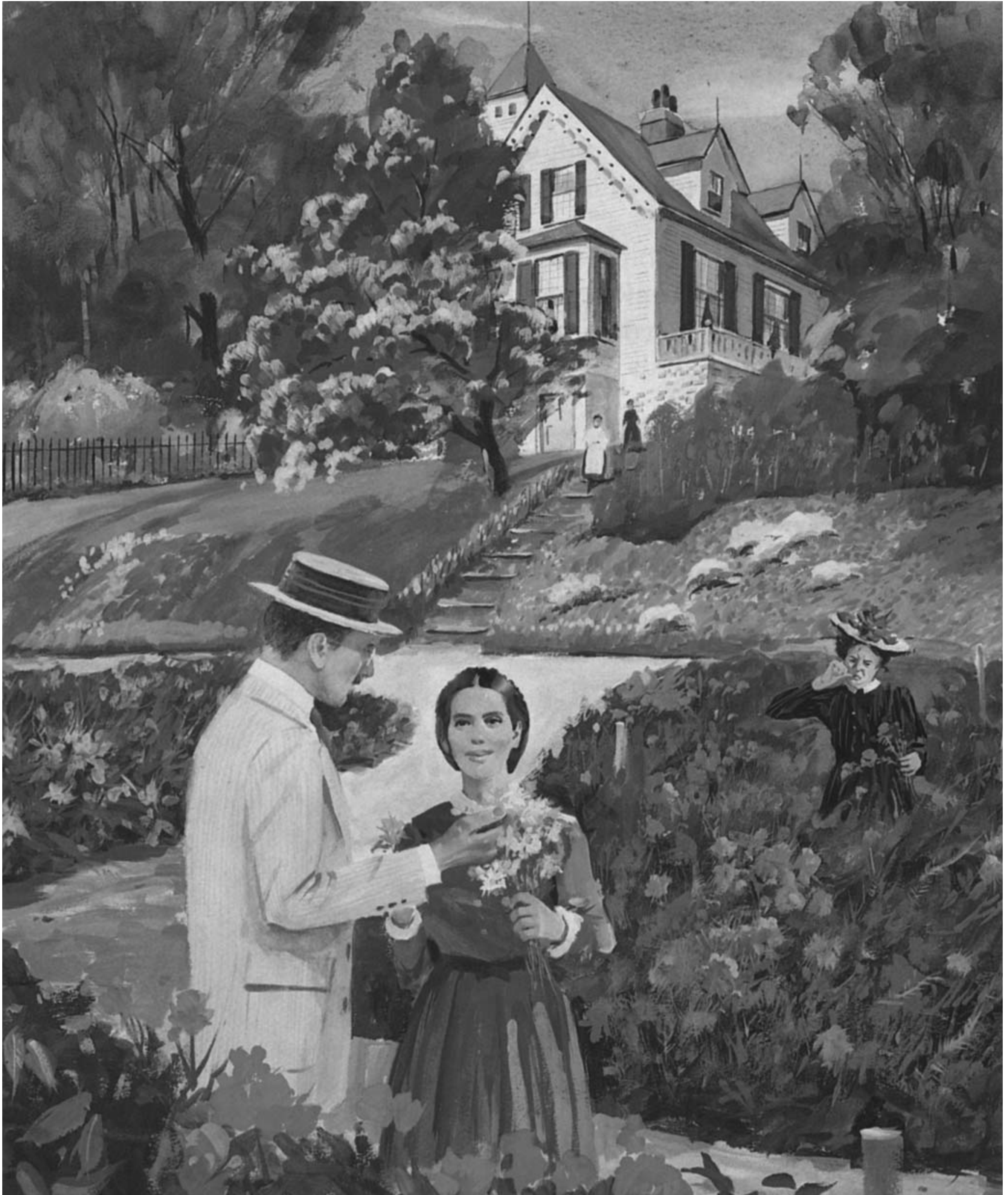
I should also note that Hasel includes in his article one and a third columns under the heading, "Further Reading." And he covers both sides of the debate, including my two books *Inspiration* and *Escape from the Flames*, as well as the four-part series in the *Adventist Review*, "Adventists and Inspiration" (September 1985) that led to the invitation from the Review and Herald Publishing Association to write *Inspiration*. He does not, however, include a reference to the "Sinai-to-Golgotha" series, a five-part series in the *Adventist Review* (*AR*) (December 1981) that triggered such a lively reaction that *AR* editor, Kenneth Wood, dedicated a full issue to the response (July 1,1982). To my knowledge that is the first time that an Adventist publication has stated clearly that Ellen White had changed her theology, though I did not use the volatile word "change"; I spoke of "growth," which is safer, but still potentially deadly.[21]

I am grateful to the editors of the *Encyclopedia* for inviting me to participate in this remarkable project. They have served the church well by including such a diverse range of contributors

**Thompson → continued** *on page 96...*

*Tipping Points on Women's*

# ORDINATION



POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE *by Vernon Nye, 1990* | ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE, INC.

**DISCUSSED** | liberal religion, women's ordination, biblical interpretation, Biblical Research Institute, feminism, fundamentalism, Camp Mohaven Conference

# Higher Criticism and the Resistance to Women's Ordination: *Unmasking the Issue*

BY OLIVE J. HEMMINGS

A close look at the dynamics of the debate over women's ordination as it arose in the latter half of the twentieth century reveals that the most influential leaders in Seventh-day Adventism were not in a war against women's ordination per se. They were in a larger cultural war that, for the second time, had enveloped American society—a war against liberalism and liberal religion.[1] A hallmark of liberal religion is higher critical methodology of biblical interpretation. Major institutional leaders perceive this interpretive methodology to be a threat to the very foundations of Seventh-day Adventism. Because the women's movement was a major contender in the culture war of the twentieth century, women's ordination became, in the minds of many, a signifier of this major enemy of the church: higher criticism. Thus, in the struggle to preserve the foundational doctrines of the church, women's ordination became collateral damage.

This paper argues that the debate over women's ordination has been caught in the crossfire between liberal and conservative religion. It highlights two contending interpretive approaches to demonstrate that interpretive methodology has never been the real issue, but became a viable talking point in the quest to block the ordination of women that by the 1980s had taken on symbolic weight as the enemy of the denomination. The aim of this paper is to call attention to the real issue lying beneath the surface issue that is women's ordination. Hopefully this may serve as an important step towards resolving this protracted conflict.

In 1973 the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists[2] convened the Camp Mohaven Conference with the expressed purpose of steering the denomination towards the ordination of women. At this conference, the General Conference *ad hoc* committee on the role of women in the church (comprising thirteen men and fourteen women from North America) met to review twenty-nine papers on the issue. A glowing argument for gender mutuality based on Genesis 1–3[3] opened the Camp Mohaven Document and set the pace for the conversation for the ordination of women. Director of the BRI Gordon Hyde stated that he was "an advocate for new opportunities and wider authority for women in the church."[4] While, as Hyde admits, there were papers at Camp Mohaven that argued against the ordination of women,[5] the resulting document, *The Role of Women in the Church*, appeared with only twelve of the twenty-nine papers reviewed by the committee, all presenting biblical arguments *for* the ordination of women. The committee recommended that women be ordained as local elders,[6] that those in theological training be hired as "associates in pastoral care," and that a pilot program should be established immediately leading to ordination of women in 1975.[7]

However, by the onset of the 1980s the conversation took a radical turn. The same powers that led the way towards women's ordination joined the movement against it. These were conservative Adventists who consistently maintained the only method of interpretation accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Why, then, did they go back to the same Bible with the same conservative approach and come back with arguments to oppose the ordination of women? There had to be something else at work here.

Careful observation of the titles of two opposing arguments by the same author who opened the Camp Mohaven Document demonstrates at

**...Women's ordination became, in the minds of many, a signifier of this major enemy of the church: higher criticism.**

face value how the conversation about women's ordination shifted. The opening paper of the Camp Mohaven Document by Gerhard Hasel

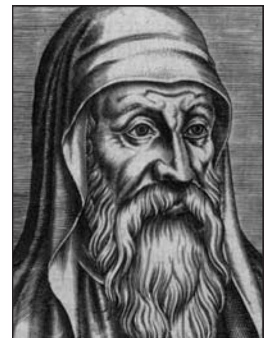
(*left*), then dean of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University and one of Adventism's most respected scholars, is titled "Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3." The article makes a compelling argument for gender mutuality. In 1988 and 1999 respectively, the same author's papers stridently opposing women's ordination carry the titles "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,"[8] and "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation."[9] These papers display a progressive shift of concerns from the need for a gender-balanced ministry to interpretive methodology to the specific concern over the feminist threat. Indeed, two popular books against women's ordination published in 1994 and 1995 in anticipation of the Utrecht General Conference session took incisive aim at the feminist agenda and the interpretive methodology associated with it.[10]

**...The debate over women's ordination has been caught in the crossfire between liberal and conservative religion.**

## Liberal modernity, biblical interpretation, and Seventh-day Adventist identity

The official biblical interpretive stance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not of necessity place it in opposition to women's ordination, and the Camp Mohaven Document demonstrates that. However, in any struggle it is the most socio-politically vulnerable that becomes the scapegoat. The issue of women's ordination stood in the middle of a fight to protect the church against a major icon of liberal religion, namely higher criticism, also called the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. A closer look at the competing approaches to Scripture as they appear in the debate is helpful in understanding the deeper issue beneath this surface issue of women's ordination.

**Inerrancy** The Seventh-day Adventist approach to Scripture places it among that group of Christian denominations called "biblically inerrant denominations."[11] The term inerrant or inerrancy often brings to mind ideas of verbal inspiration—God speaks directly to the authors of the Bible and therefore it can have no error. If God speaks, then the text is ahistorical and thus must be applied literally without regard to socio-historical context. This is the original use of the term inerrancy and this use is rooted in fundamentalism. This, however, is not the meaning of the term "biblically inerrant" as it refers to Seventh-day Adventism and many other Protestant denominations. This term refers "more broadly to those denominations with an intellectual commitment to the basic consistency and authority of the Bible."[12] This principle of inerrancy operates on two basic axioms. The first is that the Bible is the authoritative source of every aspect of human life. The second asserts that it can contain no internal contradictions. Thus in the face of ambiguity, the interpreter wrestles to find meaning based on the assumption that there is internal harmony. This approach to Scripture emerges from the historical-grammatical method of biblical interpretation—the formal Protestant interpretive methodology. The historical-grammatical method arose out of the theological/political conflict of the Reformation. The purpose of this method was to arrive at the fully intended meaning of the text's author by a study of the text's language along with its literary, historical and cultural contexts. While it presupposes that the text is the work of the Holy Spirit, its account of the historical context and the grammatical choices which the author makes is similar to a valid approach to literature. Thus when the Protestant reformers discouraged a move beyond the text to discover the meaning,[13] what they were concerned about was the imposition of meaning in the allegorical



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method used by Origen (*opposite, below*).[14] The allegorical method was highly subjective, and therefore gave the text no fixed meaning. This invested the church with the exclusive authority to determine the meaning of a given text. Theologically it was intended to discover the real meaning of Scripture and politically it was intended to take power from the church to determine what the Scripture means. However, many have distorted the well-meaning assumptions of the historical-critical method by subscribing to verbal inspiration and by persistent use of proof text—i.e., matching text with text without regard for the context of each of those texts. The historical-critical method is an inerrantist approach, committed to the authority and consistency of the Bible. Its original aim was to find out what the author really meant. It is in this sense that many Protestant denominations carry the label "biblically inerrant."

As it relates to women's ordination, biblically inerrant denominations stand against sacramental denominations. Besides Roman

Catholicism, this latter group also includes Episcopalian, Eastern Orthodox, and to a lesser extent, Lutheran churches (*left, Martin Luther*). In these denominations, those who oppose women's ordination argue that for the sacramental act of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ to be efficacious, the agent must resemble Christ. Maleness (unmarried male in the case of Roman Catholicism) is the essential factor in that representation. On the other hand, biblically inerrant denominations commit to the Word rather than to the sacrament. For these, the sacrament has been consummated in the sacrifice of Jesus and his resurrection from the dead. Of such, the ministry is prophetic mediation of the Word, rather than priestly mediation of the sacrament. This makes it possible for Seventh-day Adventism

to affirm a woman—Ellen G. White (*left*)—as its greatest source of authority outside of Scripture. Biblically inerrant denominations are therefore less resistant[15] to women's ordination. Why then is Seventh-day Adventism among those that continue to resist women's ordination? A look at the church's relationship with inerrancy may take us a step closer to the answer.

**Inerrancy and fundamentalism** Again, this broad use of the term "inerrant" must be distinguished from its original use which is rooted in its alliance with fundamentalism. Fundamentalism carries with it a cultural symbolism of resistance to modernity. In order to carry forth its ideological agenda, fundamentalism tends to stress (to the point of distortion) the second axiom on which the Protestant principle operates, namely that the Bible can contain *no internal contradictions.* It overlooks *internal* thus stressing that it contains *no contradictions*. As such the approach tends to universalize *selected* practices in the world from which the Bible arose (such as male dominance) that reinforce the cultural status quo. Any attempt to contextualize these *selected* cultural practices is met with statements such as "God does not change." The term *selected* indicates that not even fundamentalists are able to consistently universalize the cultural practices of biblical times. Indeed many tried to hold on to slavery and the flagrant racial discrimination and injustice that resulted from that, but that has proven too formidable a foe.

## Seventh-day Adventism and fundamentalism

Seventh-day Adventism has succeeded thus far in its resistance to women's ordination largely because of its alliance with the fundamentalist movement. This alliance has been forged by a few on behalf of the many who merely follow without fully knowing.

**Thus, in the struggle to preserve the foundational doctrines of the church, women's ordination became collateral damage.**

As in the nineteenth century, by the beginning of the 1980s the Seventh-day Adventist Church was pulled into the fundamentalist movement within Protestantism. This movement defines itself in opposition to the world of liberal religions. Because gender equality is such a defining core of the modern liberal agenda, resisting women's ordination became a way to symbolize anti-liberalism within the religious world. As author Mark Chaves (*left*) notes, as biblical inerrancy took on the symbolic weight of defining an anti-liberal Protestant religious subculture, it became very difficult to combine inerrancy with support for women's ordination.[16] This may explain why the Seventh-day Adventist Church (among other denominations) remains resistant to women's ordination since the onset of the conflict in the 1970s.[17] A decided effort on the part of influential leaders in the denomination to find biblical reasons for ordaining women transformed into a political struggle occurring at the site of Scripture.

**Seventh-day Adventism has succeeded thus far in its resistance to women's ordination largely because of its alliance with the fundamentalist movement.**

A minority within the Seventh-day Adventist theological academe grew to have so much power precisely because it aligns itself with the larger anti-liberal inerrantist world. It calls upon the power of the anti-liberal inerrantist movement to define and defend Seventh-day Adventist separatism and exclusive claims to truth.

## Higher criticism

For some of the church's theologians and leaders, the higher-critical method of biblical interpretation poses a serious threat to the very identity and survival of Seventh-day Adventism as the true church of Bible prophecy.

Higher criticism refers to a method of literary analysis of the Bible to determine the texts' type, source, history, and original intent. At the most basic level, higher criticism does not assume that there is consistency in the Bible, or that the accounts are *necessarily* literal. In the classic sense, it carries with it an anti-supernaturalist assumption. Like the historical-grammatical method, the historical-critical method analyzes the Bible as any other literary text, but without the assumption of supernaturalism. However, its basic anti-supernaturalist assumption needs not accompany any use of higher-critical tools. Indeed, scholars and church leaders have found its basic methods of investigating sources and analyzing content valuable not only in biblical understanding but also in contemporary historical research. Indeed, both methods run parallel up to the point where both agree that study of the original language, literary structure and historical background is important to understanding the Scriptures, and thus they are often indistinguishable.

Now here is an instance in which even a sanctified use of the higher-critical tool proves dangerous to Seventh-day Adventism. Let us take the case of the Genesis account of creation. A higher-critical analysis of the Genesis account of creation renders the story a myth (referring to the type of literature). The term "myth" in literary analysis does not mean "untrue." Rather, it means that there is an essential truth that the story conveys. The truth of the story is not in the details (which may be themselves symbolic rather than literal), but in the message that the story conveys. Myth in higher-critical methodology is a vehicle of truth. Thus the Genesis story from this interpretive standpoint is not a literal scientific or historical account of origins, but a theological thematic account. This is to say that the perfect act of creation by the Creator may be true, but the precise scientific "how" is not present in the story, and that such a scientific account was not the intent of the author.

It is quite clear, therefore, that higher-critical methodology tends to disrupt the basic dogmatic assumptions of Seventh-day Adventism. The denomination invests its defining doctrines, including the doctrine of the Seventh-day Sabbath, in an assumption of biblical authority and a literal interpretation of certain biblical accounts such as the literal six-day creation.

### The problem of association

The nagging question remains: why should women's ordination become a casualty here when the major defenders before or at the heated 1995 General Conference session never used higher-critical methodology to defend it? Higher-critical methodology is nowhere to be found in the Camp Mohaven Document, *The Role of Women in the Church*. As Mark Chaves argues:

> *…the strong association that we observe today between a denomination's commitment to biblical inerrancy and its official resistance to women's ordination cannot be explained entirely as a matter of intellectual consistency. Biblical inerrancy does not cause resistance to women's ordination as a matter of logical deduction. The association is very much a cultural association, and it begs for a sociological explanation.*[18]

As noted above, in both culture wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a major contender was the women's movement. Chaves argues that the rise of the women's movement changed the meaning of women's ordination and its "symbolic significance."[19] For Seventh-day Adventists, the symbolism goes even deeper because major feminists and feminist sympathizers of the twentieth century used the tools of higher criticism to defend women's ordination and critique the patriarchal heritage of the Bible. Women's ordination consequently took on symbolic weight as the enemy of the denomination. It became a perceived threat to the authority of Scripture and the very identity of the church. Such perception is a matter of association—association first with liberalism, and second with higher criticism, the perceived archenemy of Seventh-day Adventism. The debate over women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is thus a cultural-ideological war between perceived liberal and conservative camps fighting over an issue that is really not the issue, and the Bible serves as weapon rather than a means of instruction.

### The real battle

The resistance to higher criticism by major opponents of women's ordination did not necessarily begin with the women's movement. Rather, it coincided with a period of rigorous challenges to traditional Adventist beliefs and practices, chief of which are the foundational Sanctuary Doctrine,[20] the inspiration and authority of Ellen G. White[21] and the literal six-day creation on which the doctrine of the Sabbath hangs. The cultural and intellectual climate of the 1960s served as a precursor to those challenges. The Association of Adventist Forums[22] appears to be the representative body in Adventism that engaged the denomination in closer scrutiny of its beliefs and practices. In a statement regarding its formation, the Association of Adventist Forums states:

> *During the uproar of the 1960s the younger generation questioned everything. It focused its attention on such major issues as the Vietnam War, civil rights, traditional morality, and ecology. Patriotism, rules, and values were no longer taken for granted. Seventh-day Adventist students were no exception. As more and more church members began to attend non-Adventist universities and colleges they applied critical thinking learned in their studies to other topics—including their church's beliefs and practices—that meant much to them.*[23]

The church's initial response to the concerns regarding higher criticism came in the form of a symposium on biblical hermeneutics conducted by the BRI in 1974. This was only a year after the institute convened the Camp Mohaven Conference with the goal of women's ordination. A significant result of the symposium was a published document edited by BRI director Gordon Hyde titled *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*.[24] In the preface of this document, Hyde notes that while Seventh-day Adventists have been historically a "people of the Book" and have "accepted its authority in the tradition of the Protestant Reformation, holding to the principle of *sola scriptura* and allowing the scripture to be its own interpreter, "recent generations of the Church in

**Because gender equality is such a defining core of the modern liberal agenda, resisting women's ordination became a way to symbolize anti-liberalism within the religious world.**

their quest for advanced education have had increasing exposure to the presuppositions and methodologies that have challenged the Protestant principle."[25] As the hermeneutical crisis mounted, a conference held in Rio de Janeiro in 1976 resulted in *Methods of Bible Study*, the church's official statement on biblical interpretive methodology.

**A decided effort on the part of influential leaders… to find biblical reasons for ordaining women transformed into a political struggle occurring at the site of Scripture.**

The issue of women's ordination stood in direct crossfire of this intellectual conflict that continues to foment, and it has taken on symbolic weight in the minds of many as the enemy of the denomination. This explains why the debate over women's ordination morphed into arguments about interpretive methodology. This is the context of Hasel's regression and his resulting papers, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women" and "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation." The arguments over biblical interpretation result mostly from an anxiety over the survival of Seventh-day Adventism, and resistance to women's ordination therefore became a symbol of denominational loyalty. Thus the very organ of the church, the Biblical Research Institute, which initiated and organized the push towards ordination of women, enabled the campaign against it as part of a larger effort to protect the church from liberalism and liberal religion. Women's ordination was a tangible and winnable foe in a battle over hermeneutics that the church would not soon win. At the point that the most influential leaders of the denomination had the power to educate and lead the world constituency regarding women's ordination, it turned around and used a largely uninformed constituency to push an agenda which was not the real agenda.

## Summary and conclusion

In the effort to protect the church from liberal religion, the top leaders of the denomination abandoned a decided effort to lead the world church towards the most significant affirmation of gender equality—women's ordination. Women's ordination was not the denomination's enemy, but it became the scapegoat in a monumental conflict that posed a mortal threat to Seventh-day Adventism as we know it. Is there a wrong here that the church must right? It may help to return to the starting point of the hermeneutical conflict to find out what really happened in the case of women's ordination. ■

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## Footnotes

1. This too was precisely the case in 1881 and Ellen White herself stood the risk of falling as a casualty in that war.

2. The BRI is the section of the world church responsible for providing the biblical perspective from which the denomination may approach major issues that arise.

3. Hasel, Gerhard, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3," *The Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 10–27.

4. Hyde, Gordon, "The Mohaven Council: Where it all began," *Adventists Affirm*, Fall (1989), 43.

5. Ibid.

6. The position of an ordained local elder is a voluntary lay position unlike the ordained pastor who is employed by the denominations and has full clergy rights. The question of women's ordination in this study refers to the granting of full clergy rights that entail full rights to congregational leadership.

7. Watts, Kit, "The Long and Winding Road for Adventist Women's Ordination: 35 Years and Counting," *Spectrum* 31:3 (Summer 2003), 56.

8. Hasel, Gerhard, unpublished manuscript prepared for the Commission on the Role of Women (March 1988).

9. "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall (1989), 12–23.

10. See Holmes, Raymond C., *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation, and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, MI: Pointer Publications, 1994); and Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel, *Searching the Scrip-*

*tures: Women's Ordination and the Call to Biblical Fidelity* (Berrien Springs, MI: *Adventists Affirm*, 1995).

11. Chaves, Mark, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 84.

12. Ibid.

13. Luther protests that there is nothing recondite in Scripture. He goes on to say, "many passages in Scripture are obscure and hard to elucidate, but that is due not to the exalted nature of the subject, but to our linguistic and grammatical ignorance; and it does not prevent in any way our knowing all the contents of the Scripture." See Dillenberger, John, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 172.

14. Origen believed that only those with higher rational powers could understand obscure passages in Scripture. See "Homily XXVII on Numbers," *Origen*, trans. Rowan A. Greer (New York: Paulist Press).

15. Non-sacramental denominations began ordaining women in 1918. None of the sacramental denominations began ordaining women before 1970. (The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church of America began to ordain women in 1970; and the Episcopalian Church began the same in 1976.

16. Chaves, *Ordaining Women*, 102.

17. Chaves lists six other denominations beside Seventh-day Adventism in which the conflict regarding women's ordination arose in the 1970s. These include the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Mennonite Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is listed among the three denominations which remain resistant to women's ordination. The other two are the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. See Ibid., 162–163.

18. Chaves, *Ordaining Women*, 92.

19. Ibid., 10.

20. This major crisis resulted from the study of Desmond Ford in 1980. A major problem that Ford has with the doctrine is that there is no biblical basis for the "year-day principle" on which the doctrine recons 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14 to be 2,300 years. Ford's arguments reveal that the texts of Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 that Adventists use to prove the year-day principle are taken out of context. He argues that 1.) the 2,300 evenings and mornings met their original fulfillment when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in Jerusalem. He however proposes the "apotelesmatic" principle as a solution to the damage this may cause to the doctrine. This principle assumes a two-fold application of prophesy, one primary and contextual, and one secondary. He therefore expresses his belief in the 1844 event that gave rise to Adventism as part of the divine providence. 2.) Based on a contextual interpretation of Hebrews 9, the high priest's ministry in the holy of holies symbolizes the whole period from the cross to the return of Christ, not a period that began in 1844. Thus he argues that the Adventist doctrine of an "investigative judgment" that began in 1844 is not biblical. (See Ford, Desmond, "Daniel 8:14 and the Day of Atonement," *Spectrum* 11:2 (Nov. 1980), 30–36.

21. See Rea, Walter, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M&R Publications, 1982). The publication questioned the divine inspiration of Ellen White because of her alleged extensive plagiarism. The church drew upon higher critical methodology (source criticism) to respond to the allegations.

22. The Association of Adventist Forums is an umbrella organization of diverse discussion groups throughout the world—a result of the gathering of Seventh-day Adventist graduate students to discuss current issues affecting the church, and to closely examine the church's traditional beliefs and practices. While many Adventists believe this organization to be the "liberal" wing of the church, it has sought to avoid this label. In 1968 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists officially endorsed the association in *Adventist Review*. The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums is *Spectrum*. This journal provides the richest source of published information concerning the ethical, doctrinal, theological and ecclesiological issues that have affected the Seventh-day Adventist Church since the 1960s, and is an excellent reference for issues that have affected the church throughout its history.

23. See *Spectrum* online, accessed April 15, 2014, http://www.spectrummagazine.org/aaf/index/html.

24. Hyde, Gordon, ed., *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974).

25. Ibid., iv.

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**DISCUSSED |** women's ordination, TOSC, ministerial licensing, evangelism, Ellen White, Ellen Lane, Diamondola Keanides Ashod, Camp Mohaven documents

# Progress or Regress? *Adventist Women in Ministry* | BY BERT HALOVIAK AND KENDRA HALOVIAK VALENTINE

The following is adapted from a presentation on women's ordination given at the Azure Hills SDA Church on March 22, 2014 for its series "The Advent Movement: Progress or Regress?"

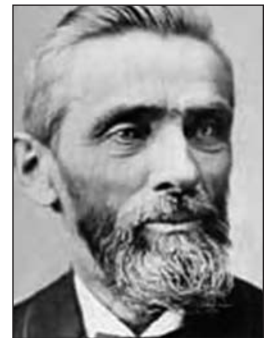
During the 1970s, Adventist women ministers holding ministerial licenses had their credentials taken away and were placed on a track that, by official policy, forever kept them from being fully ordained. One of the women who had her ministerial license revoked was Josephine Benton (*right*). She came to the General Conference Archives in the late 1970s with a list of SDA women who had received the ministerial license from 1904 to 1975. Her basic questions were, *what did a ministerial license mean in the past?*, and, *how far back in SDA history did women receive the ministerial license?* Her questions led to huge surprises, for no one had ever researched this topic in Adventist history. By looking at the nineteenth-century minutes of localized state conference meetings held annually, it soon became clear that women had received ministerial licenses from the 1870s onward. Josephine proceeded to publish her findings in her book entitled *Called by God*.[1]

**It soon became clear that women had received ministerial licenses from the 1870s onward.**

It is important to note that in 1975, no one in Seventh-day Adventism—including the leaders who had recently taken away the ministerial licenses of women pastors—knew about this heritage that was uncovered later that decade. Up to that time, at least fifty women had received ministerial licenses within the Adventist church. The decisions of the 1970s had been made before adequate research had occurred, and before anyone realized that it undid over a century of progress toward women's ordination.

## Early Adventist credentials

At the start of the Advent movement, the earliest Adventists were suspicious of organizations.[2] Jesus was coming soon, and they had been "called out" of organized Protestant religions in order to preach the soon return of Jesus. Because of the suspicion of human structures, every precaution was made to avoid drawing unnecessary lines of power. J. N. Loughborough (*right*) recalled his first years within the Advent Movement as a time when no records of church membership were kept, no church officers were appointed and there was "no ordination of any kind except that of one preacher."[3]



However, both the needs of the local congregations and the need to distinguish themselves from "false preachers" caused James White and others to justify their eventual concession to organizing as preferable to falling into ecclesiastical chaos.[4] The earliest Adventist references to those "called by God" did not typically use the words "ordained" or "ordination," but rather used "setting apart" or "laying

on of hands," probably due to a desire to follow the words of Scripture.

Beginning in 1853 (a decade before the church organized), cards of official approval from the Advent Movement were issued with signatures from James White (*above*) and Joseph Bates (*below*). In November of that year, the authority to preach was associated with ordination in order to deal with "unworthy" teachers. By the next month, the importance of ordination in order to baptize was mentioned specifically. As churches grew in membership, local needs caused the movement to ordain deacons and local elders to care for the local congregations. However, these lay leaders were typically not able to baptize.

In 1861, the Michigan Conference formalized the policy of granting a license to preach to qualified ministers which was renewed each year, assuming that after a "testing time" the minister would be granted ordination credentials, thus allowing the minister to perform baptisms and other ordinances. When the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in 1863, the Michigan Conference policy was adopted for the entire denomination.

By 1870—within seven years of the first issuing of ministerial licenses by the newly-established SDA denomination —women held licenses, although there is no evidence that after a "testing time" they were ordained. It is interesting to see the ways in which their ministry paralleled their male colleagues:

1. Their training as ministers was encouraged by Ellen G. White;
2. Their examination committees often included Mrs. White being present to listen and to ask them questions;
3. They followed the same path to the ministry as that followed by men;
4. They typically served as part of husband-wife ministry teams;
5. Sometimes they served on their own;
6. They participated in evangelistic efforts;
7. They preached;
8. They were licensed by local conferences,
9. They were paid by the local conference or by the General Conference with tithe funds;
10. When Adventist ministry shifted from an itinerant ministry to a more localized church ministry in the 1920s, they continued to contribute as licensed ministers.

## The progressive nature of nineteenth-century ministry

Very few Adventists realize two things about nineteenth-century Adventism: that ministry was itinerant and that our first "pastor" (in the way we mean that role today) was a woman.

First, it is crucial for us to understand the nature of nineteenth-century Adventist ministry. Adventists in their initial understanding of ministry focused entirely upon the newly-discovered third angel's message (the seventh-day Sabbath) and effectively evangelized mid-western America during the 1850s and 1860s. James White gave Adventism one of its earliest definitions of ministry. He said the duty of the minister was "to preach the word, to teach faithfully the plain declarations of the word of God," and when that initial duty was performed, to move on to new fields. The Millerite experience, during which many believers had been disfellowshipped from Christian churches, reminded Adventists of church authoritarianism and was a factor in moving Adventists away from stationary pastorates. Jesus was coming soon, and the Gospel needed to be shared with as many as possible.

Within its initial evangelistic perspective, however, there were attempts to incorporate a caring pastoral ministry. It was typically the

**Very few Adventists realize two things about nineteenth-century Adventism: that ministry was itinerant and that our first "pastor" (in the way we mean that role today) was a woman.**

Adventist women, as members of husband-wife evangelistic teams, who performed such roles. A number of husband-wife teams functioned during the 1850s and 1860s, and the first was that of Merritt (*right*) and Angeline Cornell. Angeline Cornell served forty-four years in ministry with her husband, Merritt Cornell, and James White described their combined ministerial focus:

> *Iowa seems to be a very encouraging field of labor… The way is open for Brother Cornell to labor successfully in this part of the State. Sister Cornell has well acted her part. The mode of warfare is something as follows: Brother Cornell goes out alone into a new place… preaches a few days, when friends appear to invite him to their houses; and when the work is well under way, Sister Cornell joins her husband, and labors from house to house as they are invited. And when Brother Cornell's work is done, it is a good place for sister Cornell to remain and defend the truth in private conversations, and bear responsibilities of the work in the midst of young disciples. In this way both can bear a part in the good work.*[5]

**By 1870—within seven years of the first issuing of ministerial licenses by the newly-established SDA denomination—women held licenses.**

The woman member of the husband-wife team was vital at that time and would translate into a local pastor's role today. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the woman partner in the husband-wife team came the closest to our current understanding of pastoral ministry. The husband-wife team sought to meet the needs of the church for both evangelistic and pastoral ministries. James White considered the ministry of the woman important, saying, "My views and feelings are that the minister's wife stands in so close a relation to the work of God, a relation which so affects him for better or worse, that she should, in the ordination prayer, be set apart as his helper."[6]

Certainly Adventist church leaders in the 1860s and onward saw no reason to inhibit women from working in gospel ministry and even to be "set apart" to do so. Women were also active as ministers in the way that Adventism defined ministry at the time—that is, in itinerant evangelistic preaching. The key to ministry in the nineteenth century was evangelism, which was the focus of the 1870s. The church recognized that vast areas of the United States were unrepresented and un-entered by Seventh-day Adventism, and evangelists were in desperate need. In light of this, the church wisely encouraged both men *and* women to receive training and enter the ministerial ranks. Not only were women working in ways that we currently define as "pastoral ministry," but they were ministers as the church defined ministry in the nineteenth century too. In 1871 the General Conference Session delegates voted that "means should be taken to encourage and properly instruct men and women for the work of teaching the word of God." The resolution called for a course "to instruct our devoted young men and young women, all over the land, in the principles of present truth, and the best methods of teaching them to the people."[7]

Thus, over 140 years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church encouraged its women to enter the ministry. Indeed, there was no definition of ministry within the nineteenth-century SDA Church that didn't include women. Women belonged to and spoke at ministerial associations, held the SDA ministerial license or the "license to preach," conducted evangelistic campaigns, visited churches doing pastoral labor, and were paid from tithe funds that Ellen White considered reserved for the official church ministry.

### A case study: Elbert and Ellen Lane

As early as 1872, the *Review* reported on the ministry of Elbert (*right*) and Ellen Lane. Mrs. Lane actually took over her husband's evangelistic meetings in 1873 when he became ill with diphtheria.

Ellen Lane (*left*) was clearly effective in her ministry and became well-known for her health and temperance ministry. She was widely accepted in town halls in various cities and addressed assemblies of people numbering in the hundreds, sometimes speaking to standing room only, with people unable to get in. Because of the evident success of her ministry, the Michigan Conference voted the ministerial license to Mrs. Lane in 1878.

By the early 1880s, SDAs began to assume a more "pastoral" focus, despite the fact that the church continued to lack stationary pastors. The Lanes adapted nicely as evidenced in their "Report" in the *Review* of Aug. 12, 1880:

> *Since our last report, we have labored mostly among the churches. Spent a few days at Wayland, and visited nearly every family in the church... We next labored six weeks with the church at Orleans, in a revival meeting. We made between fifty and sixty pastoral visits...Have also labored with the little company at Twin Lakes. They were quite discouraged, having had no ministerial labor for eighteen months.*

Elbert Lane died on August 6th, 1881 (the same day as James White) while conducting meetings in Camden, Michigan. His wife was conducting a separate series of meetings in another place when she was informed of her husband's death.

It is interesting that both Mrs. White and Mrs. Lane were widowed on the same day and that both continued on in their ministerial work long after the deaths of their husbands. Husband-wife ministries were, in a very real sense, allowed to fulfill these reflective Ellen White statements written from Australia:

> *While I was in America...I was instructed that there are matters that need to be considered. Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands,* and who are recognized by God as being as necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands.[8]
>
> *The method of paying men-laborers and not their wives, is a plan not after the Lord's order. Injustice is thus done. A mistake is made. The Lord does not favor this plan. This arrangement, if carried out in our Conference, is liable to discourage our sisters from* qualifying themselves *for the work they should engage in [i.e., the work of ministry].*[9]

Mrs. Lane resumed her ministry after the death of her husband and continued to be voted the ministerial license for the next seven years. She worked as a denominational minister in every way, yet because she was not ordained she was unable to officially organize churches or baptize those she brought to Christ. She was a member of the Michigan ministerial association, attended ministers' Bible schools, led out in quarterly meetings, preached evangelistic sermons on all phases of denominational teaching, lectured to large SDA and non-SDA audiences on health and temperance matters, conducted revival meetings, made pastoral visits to languishing churches, maintained excellent contacts with many non-SDA churches, and was even called upon by fellow ministers to finish off their evangelistic meetings when they were called elsewhere. We thus see that, in the fullest sense of the meaning of ministry in the nineteenth century, Mrs. Ellen S. Lane was indeed a minister.

**A number of husband-wife teams functioned during the 1850s and 1860s.**

### 1881 General Conference Session actions

In 1881 the General Conference Session convened, placing women's ordination on the agenda. Since women ministers had been holding ministerial licenses for over a decade with successful ministries but had not been ordained (and therefore were unable to conduct baptisms and other ordinances), the following resolutions from the 1881 session are not surprising:

1. RESOLVED, That all candidates for license and ordination should be examined with reference to their intellectual and spiritual fitness for the successful discharge of the

duties which will devolve upon them as licentiates and ordained ministers.

2. RESOLVED, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.[10]

The first resolution was adopted; the second was apparently not mentioned again other than being reported in the *Signs of the Times* by someone who considered it had been adopted. On July 9, 1895, there was a statement by Ellen White in the *Review and Herald*:

> *Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor…Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work.*

**The woman member of the husband-wife team was vital at that time and would translate into a local pastor's role today.**

### Women in early twentieth-century Adventist ministry: Lulu Wightman and Diamondola Keanides Ashod

Probably very few of the members of a number of churches in New York state realize that their church was initially established by a woman. But that is true of at least twelve churches thanks to Mrs. Lulu Wightman (*right*). According to her ministerial colleagues and conference officials, Lulu Wightman was the "most successful minister in New York State between 1896 and 1905." She was known for raising up Adventist churches, and even offered a reward of one hundred dollars to anyone who could present even one text of Scripture proving Sunday to be the Sabbath. A statistical analysis of the 1904 General Conference clearly shows Mrs. Wightman as the most effective minister in New York state if judged solely by the number of baptisms and professions of faith.

One of Lulu's fellow ministers evaluated her after her first year in ministry, saying:

> *I say as I have said all the time in reference to Sr. Lulu Wightman, that a good lady worker will accomplish as much good as the best men we have got, and I am more and more convinced that it is so. Look at Sr. Lulu W.'s work. She has accomplished more the last two years than any minister in this state… I am also in favor of giving license to Sr. Lulu Wightman to preach, and believe that there is no reason why she should not receive it, and if Bro. W. is a man of ability and* works with his wife *and promises to make a successful laborer, I am in favor of giving him license also.*[12]

In the October 1897 annual meeting of the New York Conference, Lulu Wightman received her ministerial license and, from time to time, her husband received some pay from the conference in recognition of his help to her. Mrs. Wightman was licensed for six years before her husband received his license. He was ordained two years after receiving his license. She never was.

Apparently the result of licensing John Wightman caused a discussion concerning the question of salary for the now-formed wife-husband team. When the conference president suggested that Mrs. Wightman "voluntarily lower her salary" from nine dollars to seven dollars per week to conform to the usual licentiate salary of seven dollars, her husband felt grieved and wrote:

> *Mrs. Wightman's personal work was considered by three or four former [auditing] committees as being that of an ordained minister* unquestionably; *and yet they felt…that a woman could not properly be ordained—just now at least—and so they fixed her compensation as near the "ordained" rate as possible. As her capability was recognized and general fitness known to all, and work continued, the $9 is still as fitting under the circumstances as before.*[13]

The Wightman's ministry continued and embraced a variety of roles. Mrs. Wightman attained state and national acclaim in religious liberty lectures before a number of state legislatures. Her husband proudly wrote of her in 1909:

> *Yesterday a resolution was adopted in the House of Representatives inviting Mrs. Wightman to address the representatives in the House of Representatives chamber on "The Rise of Religious Liberty in the United States." I believe this action upon the part of the Missouri legislature is unprecedented in the history of our people.*[14]

Additionally, there is no doubt that one of our most courageous ministers was Diamondola Keanides Ashod (*left*), secretary-treasurer of the Levant Union Mission who served during World War I. Her mission location, which encompassed the former Ottoman Empire territories of Armenia, Bulgaria, Central Turkey, Cilicia, and Greece, was a very dangerous area for Seventh-day Adventists during this period.

Diamondola had amazing facility with languages. Born of a Greek family living in Turkey, she learned English through the Adventist paper, *Our Little Friend*, in her teens so that when American missionary C. M. AcMoody came to her area of the Levant, he urged her to accompany him to the various mission territories in the region and translate for him in Greek, Turkish, and Armenian. She also worked with missionary R. S. Greaves, who, through her work with him, baptized the first Adventist convert in Greece. Her work with a small group of believers in Albania also resulted in baptisms. Amazingly, Diamondola accomplished all of this while still in her teens. Upon the completion of her second missionary journey, Diamondola began receiving a denominational salary, and after finishing her schooling she was asked to work at the mission headquarters office in Constantinople. In her office work, she gained fluency not only in Turkish, Greek, Armenian, and English, but also in French and German. She was soon promoted to secretary-treasurer of the Levant Union Mission, where some came to call her "the voice and pen of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" in that mission.[15]

While Adventist membership in and around Constantinople continued to grow during the war, the mission headquarters learned of horrible atrocities befalling Armenian Adventists and others who were forcibly marched toward the Syrian Desert with the intent that they perish along the way. Well over half of the 400 members of the pre-war Adventist community were martyred in those forced marches.

After being arrested and released from imprisonment on several occasions, Diamondola, along with the union president E. E. Frauchiger (*below*), left for the interior with documents and supplies that they hoped might bring the release of some of these persecuted believers. While their dangerous mission was unsuccessful in gaining the release of any, the supplies that were donated by the Constantinople mission did bring relief to some of those suffering. Upon their return, Diamondola informed the headquarters community of the results of the trip she and President Frauchiger undertook: "We found many of the members. The Armenian members were nearly all with the exiles. They were grateful for your clothing and money, which helped alleviate some of their suffering. But we could not save them from the death march. Nevertheless, praise God, they were faithful."[16]

Diamondola and Aram Ashod were married in September 1921, and continued their ministry together for the next forty-one years, working together in Iran, Greece, Lebanon, and Cyprus. Diamondola died in 1990 at the age of ninety-six.

**The key to ministry in the nineteenth century was evangelism, which was the focus of the 1870s.**

### Regression: The IRS and the blocking of women ministers

By the early 1960s, the Adventist Church still granted a "ministerial license" to ministers in training—ministers who had usually finished their formal education but were now getting ministerial experience. It was considered a "testing time." If no problems presented themselves after several years, a minister would be ordained and then receive "ministerial credentials," authorizing the minister to baptize and perform other ordinances such as marriage, burial services and communion. In the early 1960s, seven women held such ministerial licenses. They, along with their male colleagues, were assumed to be on the track towards ordination even if the "testing time" of women ministers never seemed to come to an end.

Conferences treated the salaries paid to these "licensed ministers" the same as the salaries paid to ordained ministers, which resulted in lower income taxes paid by the interns and lower social security contributions paid by the conferences. However, in 1965, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) notified the denomination that licensed ministers must be "fully qualified to exercise all the ecclesiastical duties" of the ordained ministers in order to receive parsonage and other tax benefits. Suddenly, if the licensed but unordained ministers-in-training did not receive government tax benefits, the denomination would have to make up the difference. This was a very costly possibility.

**Indeed, there was no definition of ministry within the nineteenth-century SDA Church that didn't include women.**

In 1966 when Robert Pierson became General Conference president and Neal Wilson (*right*) became General Conference vice-president for North America, they inherited the IRS problem. Would the church be able to define those with ministerial licenses in a way that met IRS standards? Or would the General Conference have to spend millions of dollars to make up the difference for their employees? The amounts also involved large sums of tax needing to be paid to the IRS in arrears. Future employment of ministers would have been much more costly. The problem took over a decade to resolve.[17]

The 1975 Spring Meeting consequently made two changes to church policy: 1. those with ministerial licenses and on their way to ordination who had been ordained as a local church elder were allowed to perform communion services, baptisms, and funerals. Since at the same Spring Meeting women were approved for ordination as local elders and deaconesses, this first action would have opened the door for women with ministerial licenses to perform almost all the functions of ordained ministers. Hence, the second action: 2. where women "with suitable qualifications and experience are able to fill ministerial roles, they be assigned as assistant pastors, their credentials being missionary license or missionary credential." Just like that, after over a century of progress, women ministers could no longer have ministerial licenses. They were no longer on the track toward ordination.

Neal Wilson wrote to the IRS in December 1975 stating that "the role of the licensed minister has been re-defined by the SDA Church." The licensed minister was *not* a separate category of minister. He could have added that *women* ministers had also been re-defined by the church. Yet even after all that, Elder Wilson's description still did not satisfy the IRS. From their perspective, to be considered a minister deserving of tax benefits, the minister needed to be able to perform marriages. Wilson's appeal was rejected, and some conferences received final notices from the government warning of the seizure of church property in order to pay outstanding IRS amounts.

In 1976 the president's executive advisory agreed "to ask the Presidential staff to study the suggestions for changing the authority of the licensed minister." Elder Wilson's proposal to Annual Council read, "A licensed minister is authorized by the Conference Executive Com-

mittee to perform all the functions of the ordained minister in the church or churches where he is assigned." The union presidents and officers from around the world did not agree, and the 1976 Annual Council did not approve Wilson's proposal. They voted "no" to this change in policy. So the North American Division (NAD) went it alone—they voted "yes." The definition of minister would be different in the NAD than anywhere else within the church. In an article in the *Review* (Dec 30, 1976), Elder Wilson explained "with the view of preserving the unity and strength of the church," the Annual Council had "voted to amend the policy governing licensed ministers to provide for appropriate latitude and flexibility within each division of the General Conference." Apparently the world church would have to live with a diversity of policies when it came to defining the minister, at least where so much money was involved.

By 1977 the IRS had agreed that the changes were sufficient to warrant tax benefits for those with ministerial licenses not yet ordained. The 1977 NAD Annual Council then added the new term "associates in pastoral care" for women pastors and for those whose ministerial licenses had been withdrawn. Those receiving the new "associate" title were "persons who are employed on pastoral staffs but who were not in line for ordination." Thus, the tax benefits issue had been resolved for male pastors at the expense of the women pastors.

## Developments at Camp Mohaven

In 1968 Ellen White's 1895 statement about "laying on of hands" in order to set women apart was rediscovered. Subsequently, in 1973 the "Council on the Role of Women in the Church" (made up of fourteen women and thirteen men) met at Camp Mohaven in Ohio. They were called to respond to the Northern European request for a study of women's ordination and to consider the rediscovered 1895 statement. The council included twenty-seven study papers that reflected diversity, yet there was remarkable consensus on the following:

1. Women should be ordained as deaconesses and elders;
2. An experimental program should be initiated for installing women ministers in appropriate receptive locations;
3. If the responses from local congregations was positive after two years, an action should be taken to the 1975 General Conference Session to approve the ordination of women as pastors in receptive locations;
4. No scriptural evidence precluded women from ordination as ministers.

Elder Pierson (*below*), president of the General Conference, thought that the study commission's recommendation went too far and decided that this issue needed to go before the world church. Such a proposal in the early 1970s assured its failure, as Pierson well knew. In 1974, the Annual Council decided that "the time is not ripe." In the 1975 Spring Meeting, it was decided that women could be ordained as local church elders and deaconesses. That was the same meeting that changed policy so that women ministers could no longer receive ministerial licenses. They could only receive missionary credentials, which meant that they were no longer on the track toward ordination. Women receiving the same ministerial training as male colleagues could now be ordained as local church elders, but were not able to baptize, celebrate communion or perform marriage ceremonies because they no longer held ministerial licenses but were "associates in pastoral care" holding "missionary licenses."

**The tax benefits issue had been resolved for male pastors at the expense of the women pastors.**

## A personal reflection: Kendra

In the early 1980s, Elder Neal Wilson, then president of the General Conference, occasionally allowed a woman who was trained as a minister

During the 1970s, Adventist women ministers holding ministerial licenses had their credentials taken away.

and who had been ordained as a local church elder to baptize in remote areas (e.g., Marsha Frost, pastor in Virginia). But in 1984, when the Potomac Conference president Ron Wisbey gave the green light for a woman pastor (Jan Daffern) at Sligo to perform baptisms so close to the General Conference and with ordained male pastors present who could have been called upon, things became tense.

It was some time in the mid-80s that I was asked to give a week of worships at the General Conference. I was serving the local day academy as the pastor of the student association. I was either a junior or senior at the academy (sixteen or seventeen years old). I remember sharing stories from the Gospels that week. And I also recall Elder Wilson talking with me one of those mornings. He encouraged me not to give up. Changes were taking place, he said, and it would not be long now—certainly by the time I finished college—was the understanding he conveyed.

I finished college and accepted an invitation to join the pastoral staff at the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Kettering (Ohio Conference) in May 1989. At the 1989 Annual Council, Elder Wilson pushed through an action that stated that unordained and ordained pastors would be allowed to perform the same functions. The new action was made policy at the General Conference session in Indianapolis in 1990. This meant that for the first time I could baptize someone I had prepared for baptism. I did so that year at the Kettering Church.

At the next General Conference Session in Utrecht (1995), the North American Division asked the world church to allow each division to decide the matter. It was denied. I was now serving at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland (Potomac Conference). In a Sabbath School session that was reporting on events at Utrecht, church members began to be convinced that, for our local congregation, it was time. Many conversations and prayer sessions followed, including a business session that voted overwhelmingly in favor of going forward with a local ordination service. This congregation had embraced women pastors since 1973. It was indeed time.

On September 23, 1995, the Sligo SDA Church ordained three women to gospel ministry in a local church worship service on Sabbath afternoon. Norma Osborn (*right*), Penny Shell and I (*Kendra, below*) were ordained. This did not receive official affirmation from the Potomac Conference nor from the Columbia Union. Later that year, the three of us flew to southern California to participate in the ordination services of Madelyn Haldeman and Hallie Wilson at La Sierra University Church, and Sheryl Prinz-McMillan at Loma Linda Victoria Church. Not long afterwards, the Southeastern California Conference, whose Gender Justice Commission had been working for years, began issuing the same credentials for all pastors, regardless of gender. The credential card equated ordination with commissioning and certified that the bearer had been "ordained-commissioned." This policy was further changed in March 2012, when the conference voted to delete the word "commissioned" and issue "ordination" credentials to all its pastors without regard to gender.

### Towards resolution

Recent happenings on this issue have worked in various ways towards progress. At the Annual Council in 2009, a seemingly innocent question about the ordination of deaconesses prompted discussion about the Adventist theology of ordination, and in 2010 the manual was changed to reflect the 1975 decision to ordain deaconesses. In October 2011, the NAD made a request to

Annual Council asking that commissioned (women) ministers be allowed to serve as conference presidents. This was denied.

Then in 2012 at a regular committee meeting, the Mid-America Union Executive Committee voted to approve the ordination of women ministers. Shortly afterwards, the North German Union session, the Columbia Union (July 29, 2012), and the Pacific Union (August 19, 2012) voted actions to approve the ordination of qualified ministers without regard to gender. In the Columbia and Pacific Unions, ordination services have now taken place. And in some conferences in the Pacific Union, qualified women ministers who were previously commissioned have received ordained ministerial credentials.

The international Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) met for the first time January 15–17, 2013, then in July 2013, and most recently in January 2014. The NAD task force also met regularly for two years. Along with five other divisions, it reported a pro position to the ordination of women to TOSC. Six divisions said "no" to women's ordination but also suggested a willingness to either allow for diversity or to support a "yes" vote by the world church. Only one division was a clear "no" on this issue.

The current plan is that TOSC, when it meets for the last time in June of this year, will conclude its work through a consensus statement. This statement will be given to the Annual Council for consideration as a possible agenda item for the General Conference Session in 2015. ■

**Bert Haloviak**, retired Director of the General Conference Archives, worked at the world church headquarters from 1975-2010. During that time he was responsible for the annual yearbook, church statistical data, and the recording and preserving of church records. He found his greatest joy in helping interested researchers discover the many rich resources available in the Archives. Currently he and his wife Mary enjoy retirement near their children and grandchildren.

**Kendra Haloviak Valentine**, PhD, is an associate professor of New Testament studies and chair of the Department of Biblical Studies at the H. M. S. Richards Divinity School at La Sierra University. Haloviak Valentine holds a doctorate in New Testament studies and ethics from The Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, a master's in New Testament studies from Andrews University, and a baccalaureate degree in theology and English from Columbia Union College. Her recent publications include "The Book of Revelation" in *The Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, Joel Green, ed. (Baker Academic, 2011) and *Signs to Life: Reading and Responding to John's Gospel* (Signs Publishing, 2013).

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**In the 1975 Spring Meeting, it was decided that women... could only receive missionary credentials, which meant that they were no longer on the track toward ordination.**

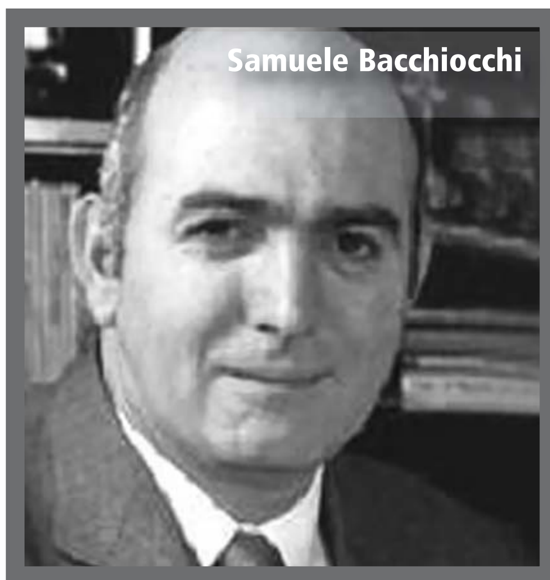
# A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church | BY GERRY CHUDLEIGH

**In this study we will see that "the headship principle" is, in fact, new to Seventh-day Adventists in all parts of the world.**

The "headship principle," which was discussed extensively in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the 2012–2014 General Conference (GC) Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), may be new truth or it may be new heresy, but it is definitely new.

Though I was born into a conservative Adventist family in 1943, attended Adventist schools from first grade through seminary, and have been employed by the church as a minister for forty-six years, I had never heard the headship principle taught in the Adventist Church until 2012 when two unions called special business sessions to consider ordaining women to ministry. When several Adventist ministers began talking about the "headship principle" I started asking lifetime Adventist friends if they had ever heard of the headship principle before 2012. John Brunt, pastor of the Azure Hills Church and a member of the GC TOSC, gave the same answer as nearly everyone I asked:

"No. Never."




It is not just church employees or trained theologians who have never heard headship theology taught by Adventists. David Read, on his independent Adventist website "Advindicate," blames a conspiracy for the headship principle never being mentioned in Adventist churches:

> *I don't know about you, but whenever I read the Bible and come across one of those many statements on male headship in the home and the church, it seems like my private secret, a secret that I've stumbled upon despite the very best efforts of my church to hide it from me. I always think, "Wow! I've never heard any Adventist pastor discuss this before."*[1]

In this study we will see that "the headship principle" is, in fact, new to Seventh-day Adventists in all parts of the world. Today's popular male headship theology was developed in North America by a few Calvinist evangelical teachers and preachers in the 1970s and 1980s, imported into the Adventist Church in the late 1980s by Andrews University professor Samuele Bacchiocchi (1938–2008), and championed among Adventists during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by a small but committed group of Adventist headship advocates, mostly based in Michigan.

## What is the headship principle?

The foundations for the modern "headship principle" are two Bible passages written by Paul. Those texts are, of course, not new. In 1 Cor. 11:3 he says, "The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the

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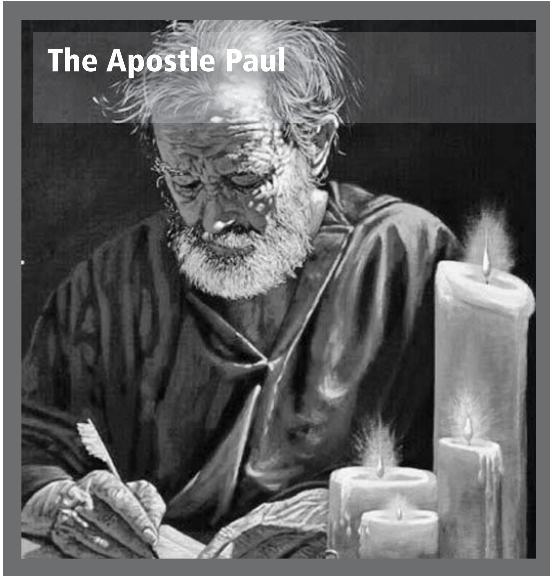

The Apostle Paul

head of Christ is God." And in Eph. 5:21–25, he tells Christians they should all "submit to one another," and then illustrates this by telling wives to "submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church." Paul balances that advice with: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."

Those texts have always been in the New Testament. But what do they mean? How is the headship of men or husbands to be applied today? The modern "headship principle" is one of many possible answers to that question.

Seventh-day Adventists, like other Christians, have never talked much about these headship texts. According to the online index, Ellen White, who wrote about the Bible for over seventy years, never quoted Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 11:3 that "the head of woman is man."[2] Paul's point in 1 Cor. 11 was that women should not cut their hair and they should wear hats to church. Like other Christians, most Adventists have believed that long hair and hats were local cultural requirements in Paul's time, but not in ours. When those cultural issues went away, Paul's headship argument was left orphaned—an argument without an apparent application.

Paul's counsel to the Ephesians—that all Christians, especially husbands and wives, are to submit to one another in love—has not usually been controversial. Ellen White, co-founder of the Adventist Church, who had much to say about the relationship between husbands and wives, mentioned this text fourteen times, almost always affirming that the husband is the leader or head of the family, but urging mutual love, mutual respect, mutual support and mutual submission of husbands and wives.

In 1957, the *SDA Bible Commentary* took the same approach when commenting on Eph. 5:

> *The supreme test of love is whether it is prepared to forgo happiness in order that the other might have it. In this respect, the husband is to imitate Christ, giving up personal pleasures and comforts to obtain his wife's happiness, standing by her side in the hour of sickness. Christ gave himself for the church because she was in desperate need; He did it to save her. Likewise the husband will give himself for the salvation of his wife, ministering to her spiritual needs, and she to his, in mutual love.*[3]

While men dominated both society and the church for thousands of years, Paul's headship statements were not developed into a distinct doctrine until the late twentieth century.

In North America in the 1970s and 1980s, several evangelical Calvinist theologians (also known as Reformed theologians) developed a detailed system of patriarchy, which organizes almost all human relationships around authority and submission, which they call the "headship principle." The modern headship movement is most common where it developed—among Calvinist churches. Like Calvinism itself, it is found most often in Presbyterian and some Southern Baptist churches. Outside the Adventist church the headship movement is closely identified with the American Christian homeschool movement.[4] Adventist websites that sell homeschool materials often sell materials promoting headship theology.[5]

While no single authority controls headship theology, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), a Calvinist organization based in Wheaton, Illinois, and co-founded by Wayne Grudem and John Piper, is the best-

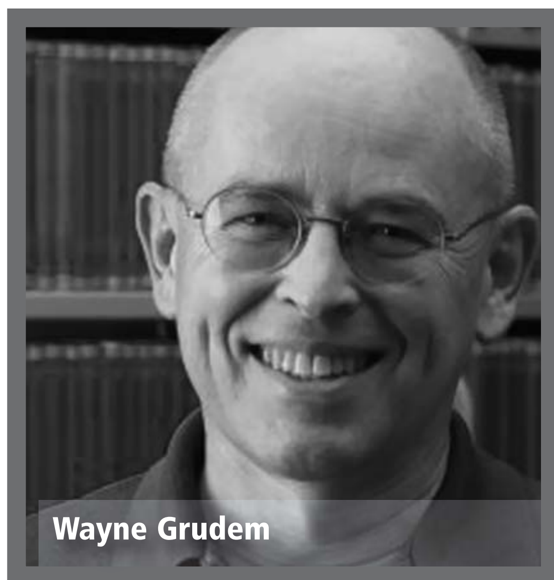
**The foundations for the modern "headship principle" are two Bible passages written by Paul.**

known and most influential organization that develops and promotes headship theology.[6] The most authoritative document of the headship movement is the Danvers Statement, drafted by CBMW in 1987.[7]

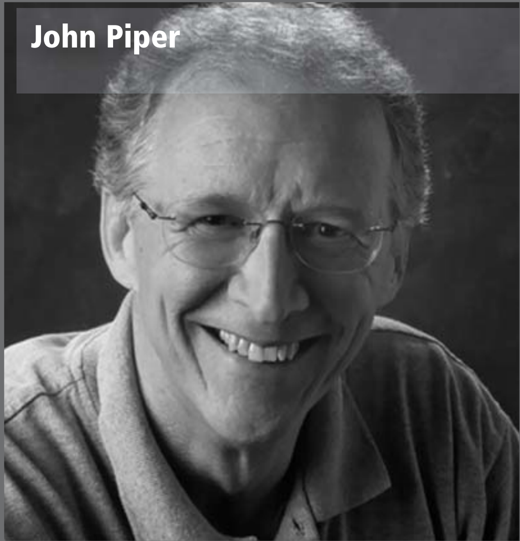
The belief that the husband is head of the family is not the modern "headship principle" by itself, as it also includes several additional elements. While not everyone who accepts headship theology agrees on every theological point, the following characteristics of headship theology are common among both Calvinist and Adventist proponents:

**The modern headship doctrine was unknown in the Adventist Church before the 1970s, and never appeared in any published book or article written by an Adventist before 1987.**

- The belief that Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the fall, not as a result of sin, and that God created Eve to be subservient to Adam.[8]
- The belief that Christ is eternally in voluntary submission to God the Father, though still fully God.[9]
- The belief that Eve's sin was not in trying to become like God but in trying to escape her subordinate "helper" role, and become like Adam.[10]
- The belief that Adam's primary sin was in not exercising authority and leadership over Eve, but letting her lead him, thus reversing the roles they believe were assigned by God.[11]
- The belief that last-day reformation requires that the original pre-sin roles be restored, with men learning "godly headship" and women learning "godly submission."[12] (In contrast to this, people who believe that Adam's authority over Eve was the result of sin usually believe revival and reformation should include the restoration of pre-sin equality.)
- The belief that the church is an extension of the family and that pastors and church administrators are authorities over members. Therefore, it is a sin for women to serve as pastors, elders, authoritative teachers, or denominational leaders.[13]
- Polarizing language: advocates of headship theology almost always express their ideas in ways that allows for no other belief or practice.[14] They talk about biblical manhood, biblical womanhood, biblical family structure, biblical headship, biblical authority, biblical submission, biblical methods of child discipline, etc. Any relationship of husbands and wives that is not built on authority of the male and submission of the female is, by definition, unbiblical. Women teaching the Bible to adult males is unbiblical. The only alternative to biblical submission is rebellion. And the only alternative to biblical headship theology is feminism, which they associate with liberalism, secularism and homosexuality.
- A fondness for the word "ontological," a Greek word used to describe the true nature of something.[15] Headship advocates argue that teaching Christ is eternally and voluntarily subordinate to God the Father is not heresy because Christ is still ontologically equal to the Father. The belief that Eve was created subordinate to Adam is not unbiblical because she was created ontologically equal to Adam. And Paul's statement that Jews and gentiles, men and women, slaves and free are all one in Christ is only ontologically (and soteriologically) true: women still cannot be leaders in the church because that would make them authorities over men. (And slavery, according to many headship



Wayne Grudem


John Piper

advocates, is not contrary to Christian teaching, as long as slaves are recognized as ontologically equal to their owners and as long as their owners treat them according to biblical instructions for slave-owners.)[16]

- The belief that God requires that women be removed from leadership positions in churches and the belief that people who do not accept these changes are in rebellion against God.[17] Critics in Calvinist churches and seminaries frequently state that the introduction of headship theology has caused division in many congregations and in several denominations in the United States.[18]
- The belief that it is wrong to accept women into ministerial training courses, and then deny them ministerial jobs. So religious colleges and seminaries should create separate training programs to train women for roles suitable for women.[19] When, for example, the Southern Baptist Convention formally adopted the Danvers Statement, several Baptist seminaries were dramatically reorganized, resulting in the loss of many professors.[20]

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine whether the Bible supports the headship doctrine or not, but in-depth biblical studies are available.[21]

## Adventists have never taught headship theology

The modern headship doctrine was unknown in the Adventist Church (or the Christian church) before the 1970s, and never appeared in any published book or article written by an Adventist before 1987.[22] Headship theology is not found, for example, in the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, which were adopted in session by the GC in 1980.

The Fundamental Belief on marriage and the family could easily have said that at creation God assigned to the husband the role of benevolent leader, and to the wife and children the roles of cheerfully submitting to his leadership. Instead, Fundamental Belief No. 23 says about marriage: "Mutual love, honor, respect and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church," and "God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity."

And the Fundamental Belief on Unity in the Body of Christ (No. 14) does not say that unity in the church is based on following the headship principle, with men leading and women following. Instead this belief says, "In Christ we are a new creation; differences between…male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation."

The Fundamental Belief on spiritual gifts does not suggest there is a difference between the gifts God gives to men and those he gives to women, and the Fundamental Belief on Christian behavior says nothing about being subject to authorities.

But the absence of headship theology in the Fundamental Beliefs is a small part of its absence from church documents. There is also no trace of headship theology in the 900-page GC Working Policy, the Church Manual, the Minister's Manual or the Official Statements voted by the GC

**The modern headship movement is most common where it developed—among Calvinist churches.**

and published on the GC website. The headship doctrine is absent from the *SDA Bible Commentary*, the *SDA Encyclopedia*, the *SDA Bible Dictionary*, and the *SDA Bible Students' Sourcebook*.[23] There is no mention of the headship principle on Seventh-day Adventist baptismal certificates, in the *Voice of Prophecy Discover Bible* lessons, or in SDA textbooks for any level of education.

The extensive bibliography in Bacchiocchi's anti-women's ordination book, *Women in the Church*, lists no earlier Adventist references, and later books condemning women's ordination list none before Bacchiocchi's book. Current anti-women's ordination websites that offer publications for further study offer nothing written by Adventists before Bacchiocchi's 1987 book.[24]

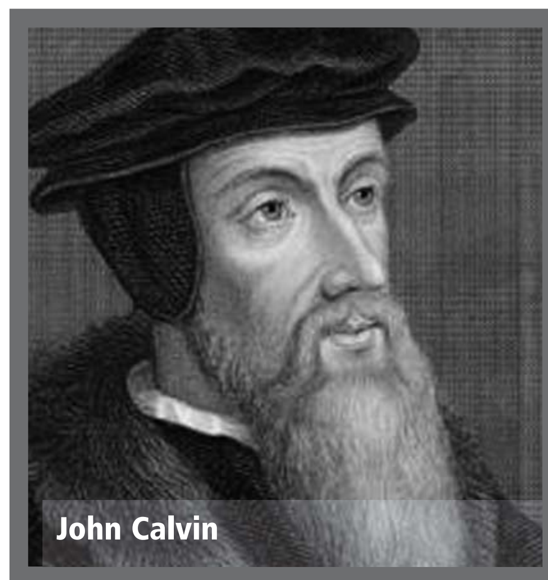
**Today's popular male headship theology was developed in North America by a few Calvinist evangelical teachers and preachers in the 1970s and 1980s.**

Proponents of headship theology, including Bacchiocchi, do quote texts from the Bible and statements by Ellen White that they believe support headship theology, but they don't quote or list any Adventist teacher or minister before the 1980s who understood those texts and statements to teach headship theology.

Before the development of the headship doctrine in the 1970s and 1980s there were arguments against ordaining women to ministry, but they were not headship arguments and they were usually used *against* Seventh-day Adventists, not *by* Seventh-day Adventists. For example, the argument that all twelve disciples were male so all ministers today must be male is part of the argument that the church today should be restored to exactly what the church was like in the New Testament. That is a Restorationist argument, not a headship argument. Advocates of headship theology argue that the twelve apostles were all male because of the headship principle, but the Restorationist argument existed on its own long before headship theology was developed.

Paul's instructions that women should keep silent in church and that a bishop should be the husband of one wife are not headship texts; they are used by modern advocates of headship theology to illustrate that male headship is a biblical principle, but for more than one hundred years before headship theology was developed those texts were used by critics to condemn the Seventh-day Adventist Church for recognizing Ellen White as a spiritual authority. They were not used by Adventists to show that women should submit to men.

Before we examine how headship theology was introduced to the Adventist Church by Calvinist teacher Bill Gothard and later adopted from several other Calvinist theologians by Bacchiocchi and others, we need to take a quick look at Calvinism to see why the earliest headship advocates were Calvinists.


John Calvin

## Calvinism and headship theology

It was not an accident that headship theology was developed by Calvinists. During the sixteenth century, Protestant theologian John Calvin taught what Adventists usually refer to as predestination, the belief that God "elects" who will be saved and who will be lost, and that there is nothing anyone can do to change the decision God has made. In this regard, Calvin's teaching was similar to that of Martin Luther and to the Catholic theologian Augustine.[25] Calvin, Luther and Augustine all taught that God knew from eternity past whether each person would be lost or saved and that God's foreknowledge determines ultimate destinies: there is nothing any person can do to change what God has always known. Calvin's "double predestination" was

more direct, teaching that God actively elects some to be saved and elects others to burn eternally in the fires of hell.

Seventh-day Adventists are not Calvinists, or Lutherans, but Arminians.[26] Jacobus Arminius believed that God does not consign anyone to be lost without any choice on his or her part. He believed that predestination makes God a dictator and the author of evil, not at all like Jesus. He taught that the grace of God makes it possible for "whosoever will" to be saved.

The free will theology of Arminius—after being made even "freer" by the founder of Methodism, Charles Wesley—forms the foundation of Seventh-day Adventist Wesleyan-Arminian theology. In her book *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White tells of the millennia-long battle between religion that is based on force, and the true religion of love, which is based entirely on free choice.[27]

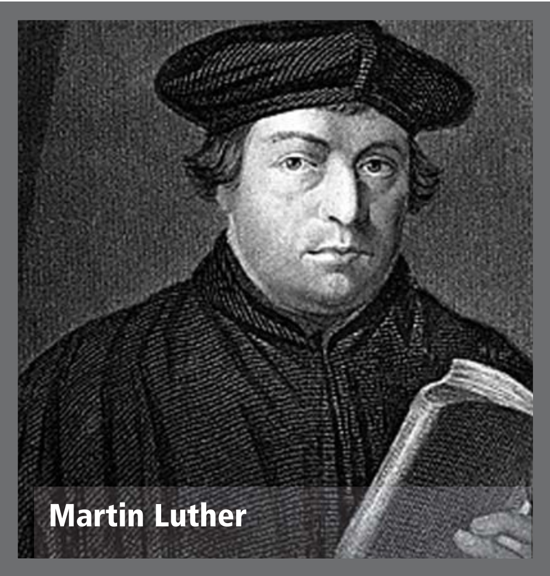
What does all this have to do with headship theology? Just this: our view of God determines how we understand Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11:3: "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." If God makes all the choices, as Calvin taught, and humans can only submit, then when Paul says that man is the head of woman—like God the Father is the head of Christ, and like Christ is the head of man—then male "headship" is all about authority and submission. In this version of Calvinist theology, men are given no choice but to submit to the decisions of Christ, so women are given no choice but to submit to the decisions of men. Modern marriage classes based on the headship principle, such as Grudem's "The Art of Marriage," are designed to teach men how to lead firmly but fairly and women and children how to submit cheerfully and with thanksgiving. But the principle is the same: wives submit to the God-given authority of husbands.

Some people who approach 1 Cor. 11 and Eph. 5 with these Calvinist (or even Lutheran or Catholic) presuppositions see that the submission of women to men is the "plain and obvious" meaning of the text. In the modern headship formula, a God who makes men's most important decisions is reflected by a husband who makes his family's most important decisions.

But as Andrews University professor Darius Jankiewicz explains, if you believe, as Arminians do, that Christ freely chose to suffer and die to save everyone, because he loves everyone; but then he exerts no pressure of any kind to force submission—then it follows that men's "headship" of women, like Christ's headship of men, is sacrificial service without any hint of mandatory submission or hint of violating free will.[28] Seventh-day Adventists have taught for decades that without genuine free will, real love—whether for God, for men, or for women—is not possible.

When Arminians read 1 Cor. 11:3–16, they do not see a system of authority and submission. Instead, they see Paul correcting a problem with arrogant and disruptive women in Corinth. They see instructions for a husband to tenderly protect, nurture and submit to ("prefer") the decisions of his wife, as Christ tenderly nurtures the church. And an Arminian sees a wife lovingly supporting, respecting, nurturing, and submitting to ("preferring") the decisions of her husband. Instead of moving from 1 Cor. 11:3 to theories of headship and submission, an Arminian is more likely to move to 1 Cor. 13 and other texts that tell people how to love and serve each other as Christ loves us.

**Seventh-day Adventists have taught for decades that without genuine free will, real love—whether for God, for men, or for women—is not possible.**



Martin Luther

The modern headship doctrine that appears to some (but not most) Calvinists as the plain and obvious meaning of Paul's council to the believers in Corinth and Ephesus does not appear that way at all to most other Christians.[29]

Headship theology played no part in Adventist thought until the late twentieth century, when flyers began to arrive for Bill Gothard's seminars.

### Bill Gothard's chain of command

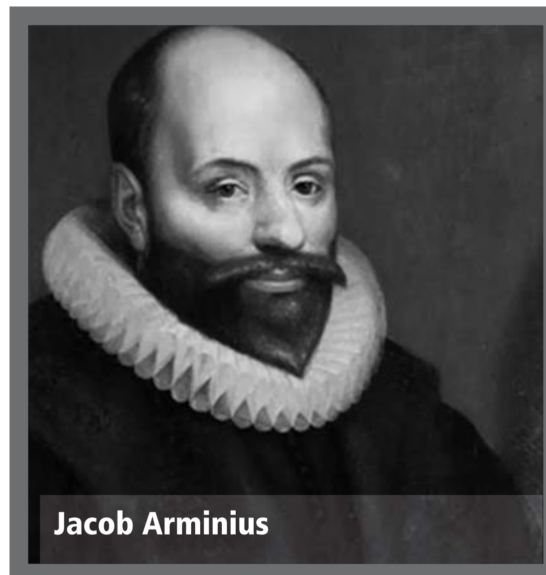
In the 1970s, hundreds, possibly thousands, of Seventh-day Adventist youth, youth leaders, teachers, and parents attended the enormously popular Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts seminars conducted by then-Wheaton College (Calvinist) professor, Bill Gothard.[30]

The key phrase in Gothard's pioneering version of headship theology was "God's chain-of-command." One illustration showed God holding a hammer—identified as "father"—in his left hand. The hammer pounds on a chisel—"mother"—in his right hand, and the chisel chips imperfections off a diamond—"teen-ager." Notes around the illustration said, "God is able to accomplish His purposes in our lives through those he places over us," and "When a teen-ager reacts against the 'tools' God brings upon his life, he is, in fact, reacting against God himself."

**The decade beginning in 1972–73 saw extraordinary advances in women's equality.**

In Gothard's success stories, if a young person decided to become a Christian, be baptized, and attend church every week, but the young person's non-Christian father told him or her to have nothing to do with Christianity, the youth was to obey the father. Of course, this created a conflict with the commandment of Jesus to obey God rather than man, but Gothard had two answers: "How big is your God?" and the "creative alternative."

"How big is your God?" meant that regardless of how hard-hearted your father (or husband, teacher, or employer, etc.) might be, God could change that person's decision. So, for Gothard, if the person in authority over you asked you to do something you believed was contrary to God's will, you were to obey the person over you anyway (unless he asked you to commit some clear


Jacob Arminius

moral sin like killing someone); God was just testing your level of trust. While obeying the authority, the youth (or wife) should look for a "creative alternative," a way to help the authority know you would be loyal and submissive, yet encourage the authority to change his mind and give you permission to do God's will. Daniel's suggestion that Nebuchadnezzar test the Hebrew diet was an example of a creative alternative.

When Adventist youth leaders and ministers repeated Gothard's chain of command theology in Adventist boarding schools, they (we) sometimes created serious questions in the minds of students who had come to the school to escape religious conflict at home. Some had been kicked out of their homes for becoming Christians or Adventists. They had given testimonies about how God had taken care of them when they courageously obeyed him, but now they wondered if they should leave school, ask their parents for forgiveness, and only practice Christianity and/or keep the Sabbath when their parents told them to.

Gothard taught the same submission to the government. That was an emotional topic in the early 1970s, when many church youth were protesting the Vietnam War and considering avoiding military service by hiding, claiming conscientious objection or fleeing to Canada. Gothard's answer: God placed the government over you. The government's laws are God's laws.

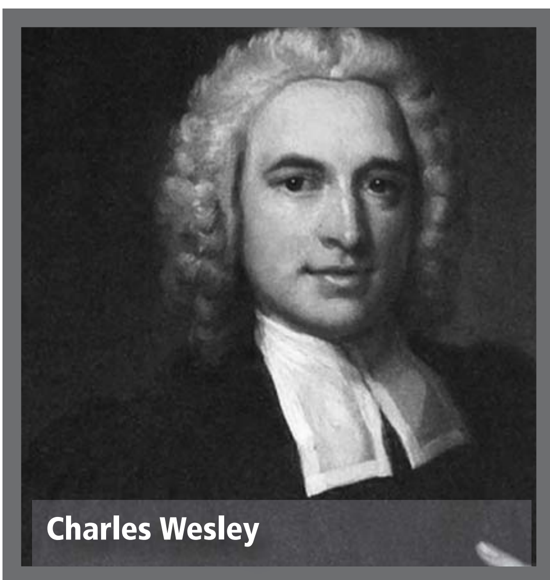
Do you trust God? If God wants you to not join the army he will fix things so you don't have to join, but only after he sees that you trust him enough to join when required.

I was intrigued at the time by the fact that Gothard's headship teaching appeared to be described by Ellen White in *The Great Controversy*, where she wrote about persecution in the final days before the coming of Christ:

> *The miracle-working power manifested through spiritualism will exert its influence against those who choose to obey God rather than men. Communications from the spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday of their error, affirming that the laws of the land should be obeyed as the law of God.*[31]

By the mid-1970s, the war and the military draft had ended, the hippie movement was dead and Adventists (and other Christians) mostly lost interest in Gothard's chain of command. There may have been thousands of Adventists who were now comfortable with headship theology, but there was no issue in the church that brought it to the surface again until feminism and the ordination of women became issues in the 1980s.

But headship theology was not dead. In the late 1970s and 1980s Calvinist theologians Wayne Grudem, James B. Hurley, and John Piper emerged as leading developers and proponents of a rejuvenated headship theology, and their writings largely define the headship doctrine among Calvinists and some Adventists in the twenty-first century.[32] In the early twenty-first century, Adventist churches frequently offer marriage seminars, parenting seminars, and youth training camps based on the headship theology of Grudem, Hurley and Piper.[33]


Charles Wesley

## Samuele Bacchiocchi and *Adventists Affirm*

In 1986, the GC published the Mohaven Papers, a collection of study documents and recommendations from a GC-sponsored committee that more than ten years earlier had studied the ordination of women to ministry.[34] That GC committee reported there was no biblical reason to not ordain women to ministry and recommended that the church begin actively finding ways to incorporate more women into ministry.

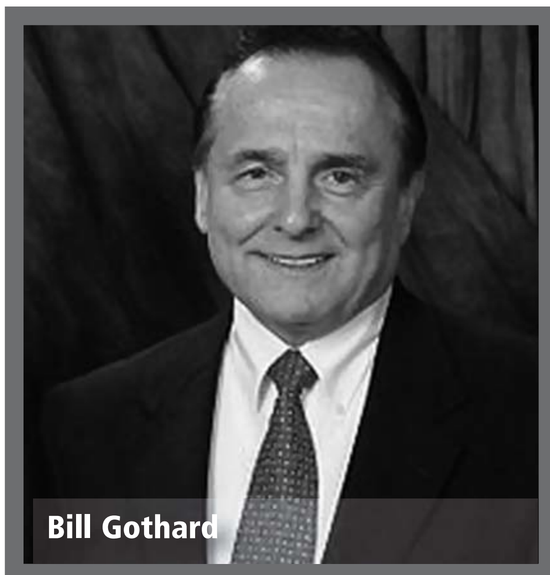
Andrews University professor Samuele Bacchiocchi tells us that he became so concerned about the threat of feminism and the possibility that the church might begin ordaining women to ministry that he cancelled a major research project he had started and went looking for biblical arguments that would stop the Adventist Church from voting to ordain women to ministry.[35] In 1987, Bacchiocchi self-published *Women in the Church*.[36] This groundbreaking book imported the entire headship doctrine from a few evangelical Calvinist writers into the Adventist Church.[37]

**Before Bacchiocchi introduced headship theology to the Adventist Church in 1987, Adventists had been moving slowly and steadily toward fully integrating women into ministry.**

Bacchiocchi did not leave us to guess about the source of his headship theology. His book was published with two forewords, both written by the Calvinist theologians Grudem and Hurley who were developing the emerging headship theology. Both expressed high praise for Bacchiocchi's book. In his acknowledgments, Bacchiocchi says:

> *Among the hundreds of authors I have read in the preparation of this book, two stand out as the ones who have made the greatest contributions to the development of my thoughts, namely, Prof. Wayne Grudem of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Prof. James B. Hurley of Reformed Theological Seminary.*

Though Calvinist theology seems an unlikely fit within the Seventh-day Adventist Church... the emerging headship doctrine was quickly adopted and championed by a group of Adventist[s].


Bill Gothard

Though Calvinist theology seems an unlikely fit within the Seventh-day Adventist Church—whose theology, as we have seen, is Wesleyan-Arminian, not Calvinist—the emerging headship doctrine was quickly adopted and championed by a group of Adventist theologians, historians and writers, mostly residents of southwestern Michigan, who ironically said their purpose was to prevent the church from adopting new theology. Those early adopters of the emerging headship theology included, in addition to Bacchiocchi, Mercedes Dyer, William Fagal, Betty Lou Hartley, C. Raymond Holmes, Hedwig Jemison, Warren H. Johns, Rosalie Haffner Lee, C. Mervyn Maxwell, Samuel Kornanteng-Pipim, and others. This group created the journal *Adventists Affirm* (initially entitled *Affirm*). The first three issues of *Adventists Affirm*, beginning in Spring 1987, were devoted to promoting headship theology, as were many articles in the months and years that followed.

Evidently, the *Adventists Affirm* group kept a close watch on the Calvinist theologians' developing headship theology. In 1987 the CBMW, co-founded by Grudem and Piper, drafted what remains today the defining document of the headship movement, the Danvers Statement.[38] The CBMW published the Danvers Statement rather quietly in November 1988, but in January 1989 they attracted much wider attention for the Danvers Statement when they published it as a center spread in *Christianity Today*.

Almost immediately (Fall, 1989), the *Adventists Affirm* group published their own headship statement, using the same presentation style as the Danvers Statement, repeating some of its points, and borrowing some of its language.[39] Though the *Adventists Affirm* statement makes many of the same points as the Danvers Statement (e.g., women are equal to men but have been assigned different roles), it is not entirely parallel because the *Adventists Affirm* statement focused more narrowly on the ordination of women, which was by then on the agenda for the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Changing culture and changing attitudes

Bacchiocchi's new headship theology seems to have answered a need that was keenly felt in the church in the mid-1980s, but had not been felt earlier. If fundamentalism arose in the early twentieth century because Christians were alarmed by modern science and liberal theology, and Gothard's teachings were popular in the 1970s because Christians were frightened by cultural upheaval, what happened in American culture between 1973 and 1985 that caused enough fear to create a market for a new theology? A look at almost any book, paper or website advocating male headship theology provides a clear answer: the threat of feminism.

Gerhard F. Hasel (1935–1994) provides an interesting illustration. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, Hasel served as professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology as well as dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In 1973, Hasel presented a scholarly paper to the Mohaven Committee demonstrating that Eve was not created in any way subservient to Adam, that even her role after sin did not include Adam exercising arbitrary authority over her, and that there was nothing in the Bible that precluded women from any leadership roles in the church, including that of ordained minister.[40]

But in 1989, *Adventists Affirm* published an

article by Hasel entitled "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretations," which, without mentioning his earlier position, identified women's ordination with feminist methods of Bible interpretation, which, he said, undermined the authority of the Bible and did away with the Sabbath.[41] Hasel had not even mentioned feminism in his 1973 paper, but after the mid-1980s Hasel spoke and wrote about the danger of feminist principles of Bible interpretation—symbolized for him by the ordination of women to ministry.[42]

Gordon Hyde underwent a similar change. In 1973, as director of the GC Biblical Research Institute, Hyde was asked by the GC to establish a committee to study the ordination of women to ministry. He organized the Mohaven committee and served as its secretary. In 1989 Hyde told *Adventists Affirm* readers, "At Mohaven I was an advocate of new opportunities and wider authority for women in the church."[43] Hyde reported at its conclusion that the committee had found no biblical reason to not ordain women to ministry. The Mohaven committee proposed a process that would lead to ordinations of women by 1975.

But in 1989, *Adventists Affirm* published an article by Hyde entitled "The Mohaven Council—Where It All Began: What really happened, and why the secretary has changed his mind."[44] Again, what happened after 1973 that caused Hyde to see old scriptures in a new way?

Not surprisingly, Hasel and Hyde in their later statements mention changes in the intellectual world. Hyde says, "several papers subsequently came in, from individuals whom I highly respect for their scholarship and their Christian leadership, challenging the assumption by Mohaven that the Scriptures themselves were neutral on the ordination-of-women question." Hyde then summarizes the arguments made by Bacchiocchi in his 1987 book, without mentioning Bacchiocchi by name.

Hasel has more to say about the biblical reasons for his new position, but most of his new insights were the same as those presented by Bacchiocchi. Hasel references several of the evangelical theologians that Bacchiocchi lists as contributors to his thinking.

GC president Neal C. Wilson also changed his attitude during this time. He said during the 1985 GC Study Committee on the Ordination of Women that from 1973 to 1975 his position "was more favorable toward ordaining women than it is today." He said he had become "much less certain and increasingly apprehensive regarding where such changes as ordaining women will carry us."[45] But why? What happened during the ten years after Mohaven (1973) that made Wilson and other Adventists apprehensive? What caused feminism to look like such a threat to the church that Bacchiocchi's new theology was adopted by Hasel, Hyde, Pipim, Holmes, Dyers, and many other conservative Adventists?

The answer is clear. The decade beginning

Mohaven

in 1972–73 saw extraordinary advances in women's equality.

In 1972, the federal Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by both houses of Congress. If it had been ratified by thirty-eight states within the ten-year deadline, it would have given the federal government power to intervene and stop any discrimination against women in the United States. For more than a decade Americans suffered through gender-related political campaigns, with opponents claiming passage of the ERA would result in such things as unisex restrooms

**...What happened in American culture between 1973 and 1985 that caused enough fear to create a market for a new theology?**

and drafting women into combat roles in the army. In the end, only thirty-five states ratified the ERA, so it did not become federal law.

In 1972, Title IX ("Title Nine") was added to the Civil Rights Act of 1962, ending public schools' ability to spend more on men's sports programs (or any educational program) than on corresponding women's programs. It was seen by many as a threat to the American way of life—just to satisfy the ambitions of a few shrill women. It also produced generations of girls who expected the same opportunities as boys and men.

More was to come. In 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that women have a constitutional right to decide whether or not to have an abortion, resulting, in the view of many conservative Christians, in the murder of perhaps a million babies each year—again, to satisfy the ambitions of a few women.

**By the late 1980s feminism was viewed by many Adventists as a threat to the mission and survival of the church.**

Yet nothing concerned Adventist Church members and leaders more, or had a wider permanent impact on the church, than the Merikay Silver lawsuit against Pacific Press demanding equal pay for women. This courtroom drama started at almost the same time as the Mohaven study (1973) and lasted for more than ten years. Accounts of this crisis are available elsewhere, but a short summary will remind us of how it sensitized the church—in a largely negative way—to issues of gender equality.[46]

### The Merikay Silver lawsuit

In the early 1970s, Merikay Silver was a young woman in her twenties working as an assistant book editor at Pacific Press in Mountain View, California. Earning far less than the other male assistant book editor at the Press, Silver filed a class discrimination lawsuit under Title VII in 1973. Before this lawsuit, which came to be known as the "Merikay McLeod Silver case," church policy enabled almost all church entities in the United States, from elementary schools to colleges, hospitals, publishing houses, media ministries and conference offices, to balance their budgets by paying women a lot less than men, even for the same work. If the

Merikay Silver

church in the United States was suddenly required to pay women the same wages as men doing the same jobs, church budgets would be in trouble.

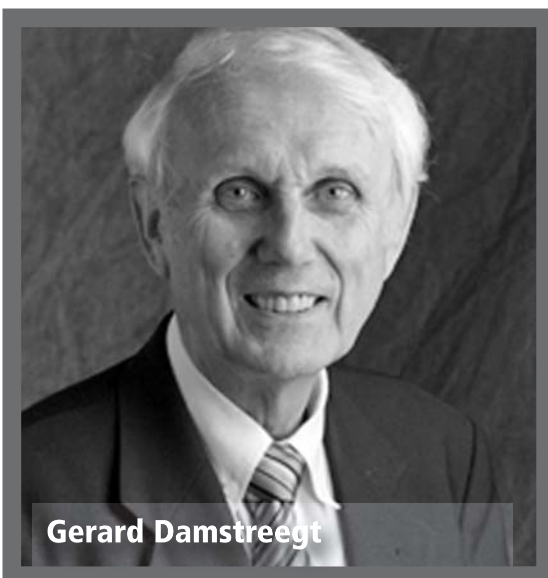
While many Adventists saw Merikay Silver and other female employees as ordinary church members asking to be treated fairly, others saw them as ambitious and greedy, willing to destroy the mission of the church for the cause of feminism. Some warned that equal pay for Adventist women would result in closed schools, neglected children, divorces, unemployed ministers, and reduced evangelism. It is difficult to imagine a conflict better designed to create a demand for new theology teaching the "biblical" submission of women. A conservative, independent website illustrates not only the threat that many saw in the Merikay Silver case, but its connection in some minds with the ordination of women to ministry.

In 1973–1985, "Merikay betrayed the Press and exposed it to government interference." Merikay "added momentum to the women's lib movement. It had effectively started in September 1973, when Dr. Josephine Benton joined the Sligo Church in Takoma Park, Maryland, as the first female associate pastor of an American Adventist congregation. In 1980, she became the first American in recent history to serve as senior pastor of a church in Rockville, Maryland. Winning the war on

women's wages gave great impetus to the 'women's rights' issues in the church. Every year the larger battle—to make women as full-fledged pastors as the men—increases."[47]

Merikay Silver and the church settled out of court in 1985, but not before the U.S. Government (EEOC) had won its class action suit, requiring the church to treat women equally in pay and employment practices. In the view of many, probably most Adventists today, paying women the same as men for doing the same job simply made the church a better, more Christ-like place. But for others, the Merikay Silver case meant the church was the victim of an ungodly feminist campaign.

Whether the Merikay Silver case was a contributing factor or not, by the late 1980s feminism was viewed by many Adventists as a threat to the mission and survival of the church. And many welcomed headship theology as just what the church needed to stop feminism's advances. From 1987 until 2012, headship theology appeared in several independently published Adventist books and sermons, but it almost never appeared in official publications of the church. One exception was 1995, when Gerard Damsteegt, professor of Church History at Andrews University, featured the new headship doctrine in his arguments against the ordination of women at GC Session in Utrecht.[48] That presentation gave headship theology its widest Adventist exposure to that time.


Gerard Damstreegt

In 2012, when the GC chose 108 people to restudy the theology of ordination and the place of women in ministry, GC leaders gave advocates of headship theology equal representation. As a result, the committee has spent a large part of its time debating headship theology instead of studying the theology of ordination.

It is likely that the TOSC process, with headship theology advocates traveling from North America to meet with division Biblical Research Committees around the world and arguing their case at the GC TOSC meetings, has provided the broadest venue to date for the spread of headship theology among Adventists.

**Bacchiocchi's new headship theology seems to have answered a need that was keenly felt in the church in the middle 1980s, but had not been felt earlier.**

## Conclusion

Before Bacchiocchi introduced headship theology to the Adventist Church in 1987, Adventists had been moving slowly and steadily toward fully integrating women into ministry. During the last fifty years, the church, with the support of GC administration, has approved the ordination of female elders[49] and deaconesses[50] and has voted that women may serve as "commissioned" pastors and perform substantially all the functions of ordained male pastors.[51] In some parts of the world, conferences and unions have begun treating women exactly the same as men, including ordaining women to ministry. And in other parts of the world, where having women pastors would hinder the spread of the gospel, the integration has moved much slower, or not at all. In this, the church can be seen as following Paul's example: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22, NKJV).

Whenever the GC has formed committees in the past to consider ordaining women to ministry they have found no biblical reasons not to. If Bacchiocchi and others had not brought uncompromising, evangelical headship theology into the Adventist Church, study committees in the twenty-first century would almost certainly be affirming previous GC committee findings that the leadership of women is in keeping with

the principles of the New Testament church. Leaders would be deciding where the ordination of women as pastors would contribute to bringing more people to Jesus and where such a practice would hinder the mission of the church—that is, deciding how to be "all things to all men" in order that by "all means" we might save some.

In his introduction, Bacchiocchi makes it clear that he believed the emerging headship arguments were so powerful that they would unite the church behind a policy that no women could serve as elders or pastors, whether ordained or not. Instead, the new headship doctrine is polarizing Adventists over the new headship doctrine itself.

**Were it not for the new headship doctrine, the church might have easily adopted a policy of unity in diversity…to incorporate women into ministry.**

Were it not for the new headship doctrine, the church might have easily adopted a policy of unity in diversity, allowing each division, union and conference to decide how to incorporate women into ministry. Instead, the church is faced with the difficult task of learning how to relate to a new theology that is rooted in a Calvinist view of God and that permits no compromise or diversity.

No one is advocating that Seventh-day Adventists adopt the entire package of Calvinist predestination theology. But is it possible to pick just one apple from the Calvinist tree without changing Adventists' traditional understandings of such things as the gracious character of God, the spiritual relationship between Christ and his followers, the commitment to religious liberty for all, and the urgency to take the Gospel to every person on earth? That is the question that the church must answer before members and leaders can unite around any theology of ordination. ■

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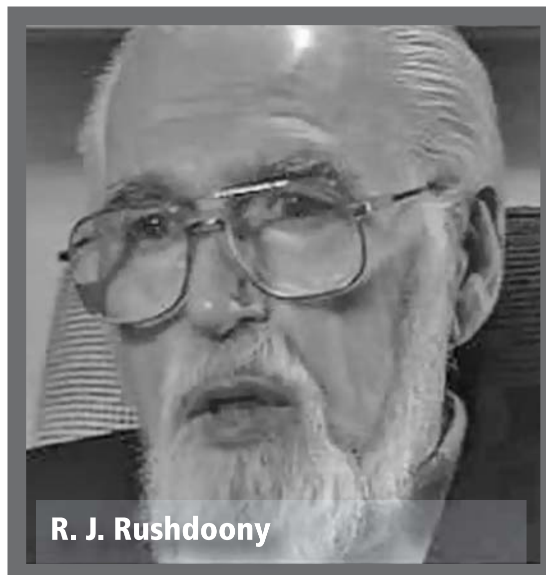
Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Thousand Oaks, CA, and publisher of the *Pacific Union Recorder*. Besides history and writing, he enjoys photojournalism and exploring California deserts in his Jeep. The views expressed in this paper are his own, not necessarily those of his employer.



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2. See *EGW Writings*, accessed May 1, 2014, https://egwwritings.org/.

3. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 1035.

4. For example, one of the earliest and most controversial headship theologians, Presbyterian minister R. J. Rushdoony, earned a large part of his income as an expert witness, testifying in support of homeschooling; Bill Gothard redirected his organization largely to homeschool training and supplies, and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is a major homeschool resource.

5. While some Adventist homeschool websites, such as http://www.orion-publishing.org, offer books arguing for male headship and against women in ministry, this appears to be because most Adventist homeschoolers are conservative, not because the Adventist homeschool movement is rooted in male headship theology.

6. See *The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://cbmw.org/.

7. See "Core Beliefs," *The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://cbmw.org/core-beliefs/.

8. Pfandl, Gerhard, with Daniel Bediako, Steven Bohr, Laurel and Gerard Damsteegt, Jerry Moon, Paul Ratsara, Ed Reynolds, Ingo Sorke, and Clinton Wahlen, "Evaluation of

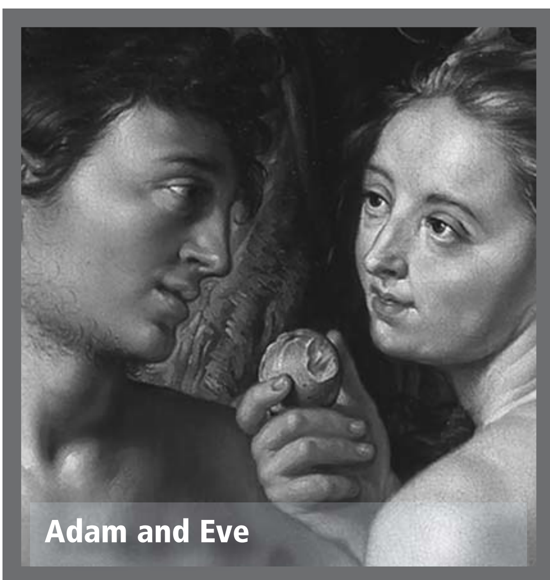
Egalitarian Papers," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/evaluation-of-egalitarian-papers.pdf, 4: "God appointed Adam as leader in the Garden of Eden before creating the woman."

9. Edwin Reynolds says, "It [voluntary submission] is characteristic of the role relationship between Christ and His Father that extends from eternity past to eternity future," in "Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/biblical-hermeneutics-and-headship-in-first-corinthians.pdf, 23.

10. John W. Peters says, "Eve's hope to be like God was not the 'higher sphere' which she sought to enter, nor is that the higher sphere that modern Eves hope to enter. The context suggests that modern Eves hope to enter a higher sphere by attempting to rise above their original positions, by their husband's side." See Peters, "Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Jan 21–25, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/restoration-of-the-image-of-god-headship-and-submission-john-peters.pdf, 17.

11. Peters again says, "By choosing to take the fruit from Eve and eating the fruit, Adam relinquished his headship role. In effect Adam transferred his headship role to his wife, and the role reversal between Adam and Eve was consummated." Ibid., 19.

12. Edwin Reynolds and Clinton Wahlen approvingly quote Calvinist theologian Raymond C. Ortland, Jr.: "Christian redemption does not redefine creation; it restores creation, so that wives learn godly submission and husbands learn godly headship." *Minority Report* (North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists), accessed April 30, 2014, http://static.squarespace.com/static/50d0ebebe4b0ceb6af5fdd33/t/527970c2e4b039a2e8329354/1383690434980/nad-ordination-14-minority.pdf, 200.


Adam and Eve

13. C. Raymond Holmes says, "While the role of women in ministry is unique and 'essential', it is different in function than that of men in that it does not include the headship office and supervisory responsibility of elder." See Holmes, "Women in Ministry: What Should We Do Now?" *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/women-in-ministry-what-should-we-do-now.pdf, 12.

14. Holmes again says, "Any solution that would ignore the biblical principle of headship…is simply untenable." Ibid., 10.

15. See Ratsara, Paul, and Daniel K. Bediako, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Jul 22–24, 2013, http://www.adventistarchives.org/man-and-woman-in-genesis-one-thru-three.pdf.

16. See, for example, Damsteegt, P. Gerard, Edwin Reynolds, Gerhard Pfandl, Laurel Damsteegt, and Eugene Prewitt, "Interpreting Scripture on the Ordination of Women," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, presented by Eugene Prewitt at the Theology of Ordination Committee, Jan 21–25, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/hermeneutics-interpreting-scripture-on-the-ordination-of-women.pdf, 24.

17. Holmes says, "We have some repenting to do," beginning with "rescinding all previous actions permitting the ordination of women as local elders. Also, the 1990 General Conference action allowing women to perform most of the functions of an ordained minister in their local churches should be carefully reconsidered." Holmes, "Women in Ministry," 15.

18. These "splits" are difficult to document because those opposed to new headship rules usually move to an existing congregation, seminary or denomination that does not teach headship theology.

19. Holmes says, "We do the women God is calling to ministry a terrible disservice as long as we do not provide training for the specific ministry to which God is calling them. It is our failure to provide such training that constitutes unfair-

**In some parts of the world, conferences and unions have begun treating women exactly the same as men, including ordaining women to ministry.**

ness and unjustice." Holmes, "Women in Ministry," 12.

20. On March 10, 2014, Cedarville [Ohio] University President Thomas White announced that due to the concept of headship in 1 Cor. 11:2–16, the university would be restricting classes in the women's ministry program to only female students. See Moon, Ruth, "Christian College Solidifies Complementarian Stance," *Gleanings*, March 21, 2014, http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2014/march/christian-college-solidifies-complementarian-cedarville.html.

21. Several papers from the 2014 GC TOSC examine the headship doctrine from a biblical perspective. In support: John W. Peters, "Headship and Submission: Image of God." Against: Ángel Rodríguez, "Evaluation of the Arguments Used by Those Opposing the Ordination of Women to the Ministry," and Kendra Haloviak Valentine, "Is Headship Theology Biblical?" See also Davidson, Richard M., "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), http://session.adventistfaith.org/assets/393498.

**Some warned that equal pay for Adventist women would result in closed schools, neglected children, divorces, unemployed ministers, and reduced evangelism.**

22. Historians have noted that in Reformed theology, the subordinate position of women is similar to the position of women in pre-reformation Catholic theology. But the older theology usually presented women as weaker spiritually, less intelligent and more gullible than men, while the new headship theology insists that women are not inferior to men, they have just been assigned a subordinate functional role.

23. The Commentary affirms that before sin the authority and rank of Adam and Eve were perfectly equal; that as a result of sin man has been assigned to be the head, leader or even "ruler" of the family; that the Gospel seeks to restore the relationship of husband and wife to perfect equality. In a Christian home husband and wife will work so diligently for the happiness and benefit of each other—even at the cost of their own lives—that neither will ever think about who is the head. The authors do not connect the headship texts with limiting which church offices a woman may hold. See especially *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pages 753–759 and pages 1035–1038.

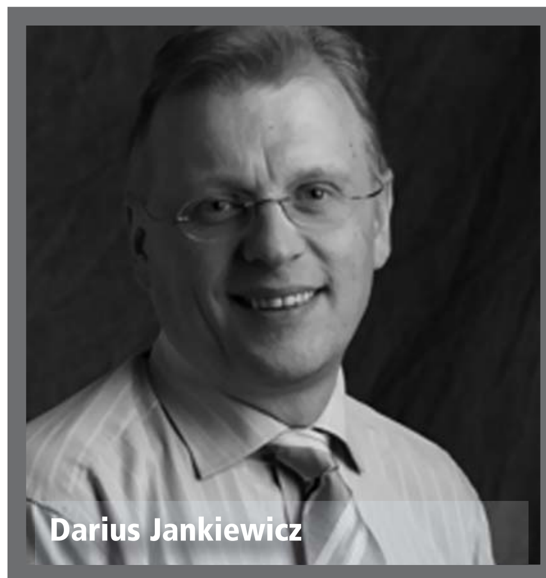
24. An example of an anti-ordination site that includes no Adventist references before 1987 but suggests a list of evangelical authors for further study is "Other Insightful Works," *Women in Ministry*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.womenministrytruth.com/free-resources/other-insightful-works.aspx.

25. See Mattson, Brian G., "Double or Nothing: Martin Luther's Doctrine of Predestination," *Contra Mundum*, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.contra-mundum.org/essays/mattson/Luther-predestination.pdf.

26. Arminians, people who mostly agree with the free will theology of Jacobus Arminius, are not to be confused with Armenians, citizens of the country of Armenia, or people of Armenian ancestry. Nor should Arminianism be confused with Arianism, the belief that Jesus was not eternally and fully God.

27. Woodrow W. Whidden, II, says in the *Review and Herald*, Oct. 14, 2010: "To put it very simply: no 'free grace' and its 'freed wills,' no God-vindicating 'Great Controversy theme' for Seventh-day Adventism!" See Whidden, "Grace, Free Will, and Judgment," *Adventist Review Online Archives*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/3799/archives/issue-2010-1533/grace-free-will-and-judgment.

28. Jankiewicz, Darius, "Two Visions of God and Male Headship: A Study in Calvinist and Arminian Presuppositions," presented at the 2010 Arminianism Symposium, Andrews University, MI, October 15, 2010, http://www.ats-jats.org/site/1/podcast/4_Darius_Jankiewicz.mp3.


Darius Jankiewicz

29. For evangelical criticism of headship theology see "Articles on Headship," *God's Word to Women*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.godswordtowomen.org/headship.htm.

30. In 2014 the Bill Gothard website states that 2.5 million people have attended his Institutes.

31. White, Ellen, *The Great Controversy* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1858), 590.2.

32. Some church historians date the start of the modern

headship movement from the publication of Grudem's *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, in 1994 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

33. As I write this paper in early 2014, a church in the Central California Conference is advertising a headship seminar for youth, and a church in the Southern California Conference is offering a video seminar for couples, "The Art of Marriage," featuring the headship teachings of Wayne Grudem.

34. See "1973 Role of Women in the Church Committee: Mohaven Documents," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.adventistarchives.org/1973-5-mohaven-.U0OAMcdO0lo.

35. Bacchiocchi, Samuele, *Women in the Church: a Biblical Study of the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 11–18.

36. The full text of Bacchiocchi's *Women in the Church* is available at this website: http://peter.hitechemall.com/english/dnl/bacchi/books/womench.pdf.

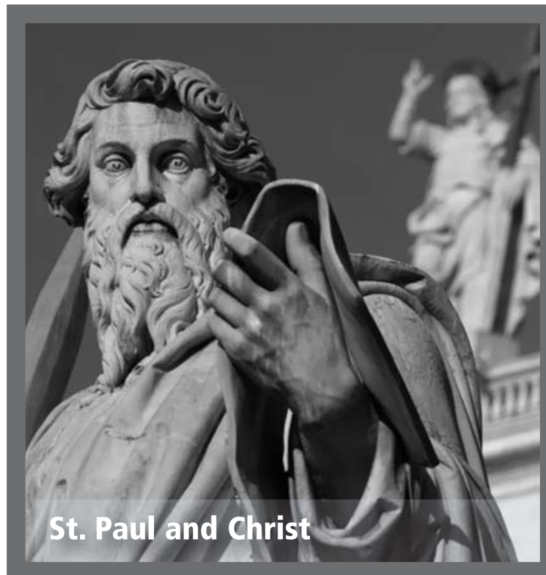
37. Evidently, Bacchiocchi was not the first Adventist to express headship ideas. At Mohaven in 1973, Hedwig Jemison presented a collection of statements from Ellen White, with commentary suggesting she had accepted headship theology. And the skeletal minutes from the GC's 1985 Role of Women in the Church committee indicate that at least one unnamed member of the committee was presenting headship arguments. Bacchiocchi was the first Adventist to compile and publish the emerging headship doctrine.

38. Read the Danvers Statement at "Core Beliefs," *The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://cbmw.org/core-beliefs/.

39. Read the *Adventists Affirm* affirmations statement at http://session.adventistfaith.org/no or in the *Pacific Union Recorder*, August, 2012. The Danvers Statement was written in the form of ten "concerns," followed by ten "affirmations." The *Adventists Affirm* statement took the form of eleven "concerns" followed by ten "affirmations."

40. Hasel, Gerhard F., "The Relationship of Man and Woman in the Beginning and at the End," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, presented at Mohaven, 1973, http://www.adventistarchives.org/the-relationship-of-man-and-woman-in-the-beginning-and-at-the-end.pdf. In the final sentence, Hasel calls for men and women to "participate in full equality of responsibilities and privileges in all lines of work in order to hasten the coming of our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

41. Hasel, Gerhard, "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretations," *Adventists Affirm*, Fall (1989), 12–23.



St. Paul and Christ

42. One theologian told me that before his death Hasel returned to his original position, but Hasel never wrote anything documenting that change.

43. Hasel, "Biblical Authority," 42.

44. Ibid., 41–43.

45. "Role of Women in the Church—Committee Report," *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, presented Mar. 26-29, 1985 in Washington, D.C., http://www.adventistarchives.org/1985-study-committee-minutes.pdf, 18.

46. For the story from Merikay Silver's perspective see her book, *Betrayal: The Shattering Sex Discrimination Case of Silver Vs. Pacific Press Publishing Association* (Austin, TX: Mars Hill Publishing, 1985).

47. "The Merikay Silver Case: Part One of Three," *Pilgrim's Rest Presents: SDADefend.com*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.sdadefend.com/MINDEX-M/Silver.pdf, 12.

48. Damsteegt, P. Gerard, "A Response to the North American Division Ordination Request," *Andrews.edu*, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.andrews.edu/~damsteeg/Ordination.html.

49. GC Committee Minutes, April 3, 1975, 75–153–154, and October 14, 1984, 84–386–387.

50. GC Committee Minutes, April 3, 1975, 75–153–154.

51. On Oct. 9, 1989 the GC Committee voted to send to GC session a recommendation that women not be ordained, but to immediately authorize commissioned women pastors to perform essentially the ministerial functions of an ordained minister. General Conference Committee Minutes, October 9, 1989, 89–429–431.

**The new headship doctrine is polarizing Adventists over the new headship doctrine itself.**

**Thompson** ➾ **continued** *from page 61.*

and asking us to sign our names. That would be a wonderful disease to infect the whole church. ■

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His books *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* and *Escape from the Flames: How Ellen White Grew from Fear to Joy and Helped Me to Do it Too* have played an important role in the community discussion about Ellen White.

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3. *The Remnant Study Bible with E. G. White Comments* (Coldwater, MI: Remnant Publications, 2009).

4. "Breaking news," *SDA Apostasy.org*, accessed May 14, 2014, http://www.sdaapostasy.org/.

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10. Peterson, William S., "Ellen White's Literary Indebtedness," *Spectrum* 3:4 (Autumn 1971), 79.

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12. See Thompson, *Inspiration*, pages 51–52. Milton C. Wilcox was editor of *The Signs of the Times* from 1891 to 1913. The quotation is from page 12 of *Questions and Answers* (1911), a reprint of questions and answers from the *Signs*.

13. Couperus, Molleurus, ed., "The Bible Conference of 1919," *Spectrum* 10:1 (May, 1979), 45–46.

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16. White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages*, vol. 1 (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1958), 15–23.

17. Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, Seventh-day Adventists Believe... *A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, D.C.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, 1988), 8. The "Acknowledgment" page indicates that P. G. Damsteegt prepared the "initial draft" of each chapter. With the addition of the 28th Fundamental Belief, a new edition has appeared: *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, 2005), 15.

18. Ibid., v.

19. Holbrook, Frank and Leo Van Dolson, eds., *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992). Frank Hasel's essay is entitled "Reflections on the Authority and Trustworthiness of Scripture," pages 201–220.

20. White, Ellen G., *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1913), 432.

21. The full Sinai-Golgotha series included the five issues in *Adventist Review* of December 1981 (Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31), the *AR* follow-up issue of July 1, 1982, and another article, "Even the Investigative Judgment Can Be Good News," published in Westwind, the Walla Walla College alumni journal, in Winter (1982), 4–7, 11. The "IJ" article was actually the trigger for the whole series and was a response to Desmond Ford's claim in his famous Adventist Forum presentation at PUC on October 27, 1979, that there was "no biblical way of proving the Investigative Judgment." Ford's stance troubled me because, as I had come to understand it, the IJ doctrine had become an important part of my theology, a theodicy issue rather than a matter of salvation. Thus I saw myself standing in judgment as a witness, not as the accused.

But to my amazement, when I went back to the early Ellen White materials (*Spiritual Gifts*, 1858; *Spirit of Prophecy* vol. 1, 1870), I did not find my position at all. Given the volatility of the material, hundreds of hours went into editing and revising the series. When I came to the "IJ" article that had suffered much at the hands of the *AR* editors, I was too exhausted to take it on, so suggested to Wood that the series run without it. I sensed that he was relieved. Earlier, when I had alerted him to the potential explosiveness of the material, he responded in a letter dated January 16, 1981: "Our readers are quite willing to accept truth if a proper case is made for it." That editorial nudge from Wood led directly to the explicit listing of these six growth points in part five of the series (Dec. 31, 1981):

**1. Role of the love of God in the great rebellion**. In contrast with *Patriarchs and Prophets*, the early sources do not mention the love of God as a factor in the conflict.

**2. Relationship of free will and the law to the character of God**. Again there is no link in the earlier sources.

**3. The possibility of restoration of Lucifer, even after he had sinned**. In the early sources, there is no hope for Lucifer. Only in *Patriarchs and Prophets* 39 (and also in *The Great Controversy*) does God offer to reinstate him in his office if he would be "willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom."

**4. Eternal nature of Christ**. Ellen White was never as strident in her anti-Trinitarian stance as her husband James was ("that old Trinitarian absurdity"), but the early sources clearly indicate that she did not see Christ as fully divine.

**5. Love of the Father for sinners**. "God is love" are the first words of *PP* and the last of *GC*. In *Spiritual Gifts* those lines are missing and she never links love with the Father.

**6. The cross as an illustration of divine self-sacrifice**. In *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White actually enhanced her emphasis on the substitutionary atonement with its cross pointed heavenward (see "It Is Finished," chapter 79). But late in life she also turned the cross earthward, drawing on the Gospel of John, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, NRSV). That earthward perspective is missing from the early sources.

Wood risked much in publishing the series. The late Paul Landa told me that he had asked Arthur White in a public setting for his opinion of the series. White was cryptic: "I wish you hadn't asked. Ask the editor of the *Review*. He knows what I think."

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## The sound of something falling

*for EGW*

BY BRENDA BUTKA

a girl, hit on the forehead by a rock, falls
her world goes dark, awakens
grows up with visions sees
god sees angels speaks to god
a rock's accidental arc
the voice of god falling
into her upturned hands
into her red books, spellbound
she is god's servant
the prophet of an eye for an eye, a year for a day
the mark of the beast, calculations
about the end of time
the voice of god falling
into her upturned hands
I was buried in this story
along with everyone I knew
heard the sound
turned it into salvation
wound it around every thin day
that's just the way it was
the sound of something falling
a rock's accidental arc
Eve that bad girl, the walls of Jericho
leaves, pages, sermons, prayers
those old red books
the sound of something falling
the sound of something
hidden I tried to hear forever

the sound of my mother falling
pushed by death, her bedside bible, Kleenex
the Vicks bottle a blue stone beautiful as sin
the sound of this is it, she said to me
St. Peter won't have you because you won't be there
at the sapphire gates
you are falling, what will I tell him when he asks?

tell him I had to try out many things
try them on for size, for sound, to see if,
falling, they whispered
the sound of falling out of one world
into many, a rocky accidental arc
stepping stones leading nowhere
but to the surefooted joy of this one blue day
braided through the sound of falling water
sunlight falling on my upturned hands

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