

## Presenting Ellen G. White to the Non-Adventist Inquirer

Roger W. Coon and Jerry Moon<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

1. Varying attitudes as to whether or not it should be presented:
  - a. From the pulpit
  - b. In Bible-study circles
  - c. In personal, private one-on-one study
2. Varying attitudes as to when it should be presented:
  - a. Early in a series of studies
  - b. At the end just before baptism
3. Varying attitudes as to how it should be presented:
  - a. One subject among many, to be accepted by prospective candidate for membership
  - b. Integrated into the very warp-and-woof of the study series

### I. Objectives and Mode of Approach

#### A. The Paramount Objective

To get the inquirer to realize that the SDA Church is not "just another church" among many, though perhaps nearer to the teachings of Christ than the others; rather to impress vividly upon the consciousness that the SDA Church is totally unique in three special respects:

1. It arose at a special time in human history—it has "roots" that no other church has; three times singled out by special characteristics in Revelation 10.
2. It was given a special message for a particular time in human history, a message that no other church even claims as its own: the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:6-12.
3. It was given a special messenger, to ensure correctness of doctrine and focus of effort in relation to worldwide mission as the end of time approaches—see Revelation 12:17.

#### B. Methodology of Accomplishment

1. Demonstrate from Scripture not only the possibility of the existence of a post-New Testament spiritual-gift of prophecy, but also that it is a subject of expectation at the end of time.
2. Demonstrate from Scripture that the SDA Church was predicted 1,700 years in advance

---

<sup>1</sup>Updated and expanded from Roger W. Coon, "Presenting Ellen G. White to the Non-Adventist Inquirer," GSEM 534 Lecture Outline, Andrews University, May 18, 1995. The sections from Dwight K. Nelson, Skip MacCarty, and Doug Batchelor are new. Eric Stubbart provided the outline/transcription of Dwight K. Nelson's presentation.

- by creating a "roots-awareness" vis-a-vis Rev. 10-12-14.
3. Demonstrate that the SDA Church is indeed the "remnant" of Rev. 12:17.
4. Demonstrate the legitimacy/authority of EGW as a true prophet of the Lord for this time in history, by applying the appropriate Biblical tests of a prophet to her words and work.
  - a. Get the inquirer to read the writings for himself/herself
  - b. Get the inquirer to compare the teachings of the Bible with those of EGW
5. Thus the prospective member is grounded before baptism, and hopefully post-baptism attrition losses will be reduced significantly.

## II. Models of Effective Strategies Employed by Various Presenters

### A. Roger W. Coon (in *A Gift of Light*)

1. Published in Oct., 1983, this was the first book of its kind published by the SDA Church in 20 years—a book intended to make a first introduction of EGW to the non-SDA reader (it has since sold 80,000 copies in English and been translated into six languages).
2. Although it was written for the non-SDA, the author had to keep one eye on the SDA reader, for if that reader could not be "grabbed," he would not recommend it with much enthusiasm to his non-SDA friends.
3. Therefore, given the special objectives it had to meet, the book had to:
  - a. Contain material that would not be "old stuff" to the SDA who had been in the church a decade or more—it had to be new and fresh.
  - b. Be long on human-interest factors, and comparatively short on heavy theological disquisition.
  - c. Be Bible-based.

#### 4. Chapter Development:

##### Chapter One: "The Prophet: 'A Man for All Seasons'?"

Experience of William Foy, 1842. Old Testament functions of a prophet. New Testament "spiritual gifts." Joel 2 and Acts 2: is there a place for post-New Testament manifestations of the gift of prophecy?

##### Chapter Two: "The Weakest of the Weak: God's Third Choice"

Basically, biographical facts concerning EGW: early life, gift at age 17 in 1844, marriage to James White, move to Michigan; Spiritualist Dr. Brown's consternation upon examining EGW in vision at Parkville, MI., and her Civil War prophecy given there; her children in church work; her writing career; the tribute of feminist writer Edith Deen.

##### Chapter Three: "'Plumbers Leaks' in the Bed Chamber: A Problem with Prophets"

EGW exposes a secret bigamist at a camp meeting; the problem of the Syrian king in Elisha's time (2 Kings 6); Ellen White confronts 2 leaders in a health-care institution who were leading a double life and betraying their marriage vows, from half-way around the world; the previously-untold stories of Sam Hamilton (locating the well at Paradise Valley Sanitarium) and Harold Blunden (the exposure of Nathaniel Davis in Australia, and his spiritual recovery and rehabilitation).

##### Chapter Four: "A Scientist Looks at EGW"

The story of Cornell University scientist Dr. Clive McCay: how a Chinese-American graduate student, and an SDA chemistry department chairman and an SDA editor helped this distinguished scholar learn of EGW. Briefly reviews



EGW's counsels in various aspects of diet/nutrition. Shows how scientific findings from 1977 through 1982 from nonSDA research support and uphold EGW's position.

Chapter Five: "Not Without Honor"

Examines the opinions of some interesting and varied nonSDAs who looked at EGW and found value in her writings: the world's leading authority on archaeology, a prominent and popular American journalist (ABC radio and syndicated newspaper column), a Japanese university professor, an eastern European government minister of education who plagiarized the book Education, a recent German PhD candidate in sociology's dissertation evaluation of EGW's role in the SDA church, and the editorial assessment of EGW's career by the Toledo Blade and New York Independent.

**B. Public Evangelistic Approach: Dwight K. Nelson in the "NeXt Millennium Seminar" (Net '98)**

**Title: "Turning Prophets into Profits: Are All Modern Prophets a Scam?"**

**Outline:**

**Introduction**

How to become a prophet through the School of the Prophets.

*Sun* Tabloid and the top Hollywood psychics

Transition: In the counterfeit, is there the possibility of the genuine thing?

**The Cost of Being a Disciple**

Matt. 23:29-34- Jesus condemns the Pharisees for rejecting the prophets

Matt. 11:2,3- John the Baptist questions whether Jesus was the Messiah

**Rev. 12:17- the testimony of Jesus**

What is the spirit of prophecy?

Rev. 19:9,10- the testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy

Rev. 22:9-The presence of the prophet in the community

Amos 3:7- God doesn't do anything in secret unless He reveals it to His prophets

List of prophets sent before major events in the Bible:

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Noah             | flood                 |
| b. Moses            | exodus                |
| c. Isaiah           | exile                 |
| d. John the Baptist | first advent of Jesus |

It is logical for Jesus to send a prophet before His second coming

God says this will happen-Rev. 12:17

Prophets don't end with the New Testament-Acts 2:17,18

What does Matt 11:2, 3 mean, "None greater than John the Baptist?" He was given the job of announcing the coming of Jesus.

John did not write any books of the Bible.

One does not have to be canonical to be a prophet.

One does not have to be canonical to be considered a great prophet, examples:

Elijah

Elisha

It is possible to have prophetic writings that did not make it into the Bible and still be a prophet.

1 Chron. 29:29- Nathan and Gad were prophets who wrote, but their writings are not in the Bible.

One does not have to be a man to be a prophet.

Deborah

Huldah

Anna

4 daughters of Philip

Four tests to tell the difference between false and true prophets:

Deut. 18:21, 22- Does the prophet's predictions come true?

Deut. 13:1-3- If the prophet's predictions come true, but he leads you away from God, do not follow him.

Isa. 8:20- Does the prophet teach according to the Bible? If not, he is a false prophet.

Acts 17:11- The Bereans tested Paul's words according to the Scripture.

1 John 4:1-3- A true prophet will be centered in Christ.

Matt. 7:15-20- By their fruits you will know them.

The fruits of the Spirit are the true test, not the gifts of the Spirit.

Ellen White Introduced:

#### Who is she?

"A woman who from the age of 17 until she died 70 years later testified that she received approximately 2,000 visions and dreams that varied in length from a minute to nearly 4 hours. A woman who took the knowledge and counsel she received in those visions and wrote it out resulting in 5,000 articles and 26 books in her life time, including compilations from her 55,000 pages of manuscript with more than a hundred titles now available in English. From the information now available, she could be the most translated woman writer in the history of human literature. She is the most translated American author of either gender.

#### Christ Centered Life:

Her life-changing masterpieces centered on Jesus. The classic, translated into 135 languages, is the little book called *Steps to Christ*. Through this woman's dynamic leadership she helped raise up a Christian movement that offers the largest Protestant educational system today on the globe, the most extensive Protestant health system anywhere on the earth tonight. Through her visionary leadership, this church she helped found is in more countries today than any other Protestant Church on earth.

#### Ellen White, the Author:

Without question, her writings have impacted the world of human thought significantly. She covered a whole broad range of subjects from education, health, prophecy, nutrition, ethno-linguistic issues, creationism, and origin of life. Now I want to share a quotation with you. This is from Mark Noll, a professor at Wheaton College who wrote an award winning book voted book of the year by *Christianity Today*, titled *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. He is talking about a recent book *the Creationists*, by Ron Numbers of the University of Wisconsin.

He explains how a popular belief known as "creationism" -the theory that the earth is ten thousand or less years old—has spread like wild fire in our century from its humble beginnings in the writings of Ellen White, the founder of Seventh-day Adventism, to its



current status as gospel truth embraced by tens of millions of Bible-believing evangelicals and fundamentalists around the world.

from a blurb for *The Creationists*, cf.. *The Sandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 189.

What he is saying is that this woman who brought the Testimony of Jesus which is the Spirit of Prophecy to an end time community of faith, through her visionary writings, has impacted the thought of the evangelical Christian community all over the world through her seminal work on creationism, the origin of life. This little woman who began her humble Christian journey as a Methodist, that's right, she was a Methodist teenager, called by God to a prophetic ministry, was instrumental in raising up a remnant community of faith and truth known today as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The name of this prodigious writer and influential spiritual leader, who was a woman, her name? Ellen White.

### Conclusion:

#### Testimony:

Tonight I want to conclude with a personal testimony. Andrews University, where this uplink is coming from, holds a very dear and sacred place in my heart. Because it was as a graduate student right here where you guys are right now (points to audience), that I met Jesus, 24 years ago in that little building across the way. I'll never forget the day, it was gray and wintry, and I'm telling you they are never grayer than in Michigan in January. It was one of those days and I was in the stairwell of the theological seminary building, and I'm pouring out my heart to a professor, I'm struggling with guilt, and he says to me, 'boy, go back and read *Steps to Christ*.' So I stumbled back to my little apartment here- Karen's' and my Maple Wood apartments, and I pulled out a book, a little paperback book. Oh, I had read it, you know, I grew up in a Christian home, fifth or sixth generation Christian home. I had read the book before, but you know when you grow up in it, you take it all for granted, and then there comes the moment in life where God makes sure you have the chance to make the choice yourself. That was the signal moment for me. And so I pulled that book out and began to read it, and I must tell you, that little classic, 135 languages, I read it, and the title becomes for me, a self-fulfilled prophecy. It literally led me on steps back to Jesus Christ. So you can understand in my heart there is a very special place, for the one who put that book together, who through that book got me back to the Jesus of the Gospels, got me back to the Holy Scriptures, to find that in every book of the Bible God is offering a forever friendship if you would just reach out to Him. You know what, the guilt and the shame, and the fear I had been living with for days, just rolled away. I found Jesus, through that tiny little paperback book. And it was out of that discovery- young-adult encounter with Him- that I began to find a new way to meet with God everyday, and our last lecture together, by the way, our final lecture, I want to share that way with you, because it has worked for me ever since, and I want it to work for you- how to make that little classic *Steps to Christ* began to grow, Yea, who wrote *Steps to Christ*? You guessed it, Ellen White did.

#### Proper Place of Ellen White:

Then I found out that maybe I could go back to another book called *The Desire of Ages*. the story of the life of Jesus. I got back into these pages. By the way, I need to say right now, did she become a Bible to me? She is not a Bible to me! Not on your life! In fact, do you know how she described herself? She said I'm a little light, and I shine to the Great Light. She said I'm like the moon. The moon, all it can do is capture the reflection of the sun. Nobody ever gets the moon and the sun mixed up. She said I am not the sun- The Book! The Book! The Book! Her whole mission and ministry is to get the reader back to the Book, to the Son of



Righteousness here. Is she a Bible to me? No! Do I go to her first? No! Do I have other authors? You come to my library at home, I have every wall covered with books. I read as widely as is humanly possible with my kind of schedule to read.

Do I turn to her? Yep. Why? Because more than other writers I have found in her twin passions, undeniable passions, here they are: (1) She has a passion for Jesus. I have never found a writer anywhere on earth so deeply filled with a passion for Jesus Christ. And I want<sup>t</sup> that passion for myself. And the second passion? You know what? I have never read anybody- you can go only a few paragraphs and suddenly her passion- the same passion, by the way, that ignited the heart of Jesus, (2) a passion to lead lost men and women, young adults and kids, back to the Savior. She is ignited by those passions, and when I read her, this is testimony time, those passions begin to flicker and burn in my own heart.

### Personal Influence:

Is she the Bible? No! Is she equal to the Bible? No! Do you have to believe in her to be saved? Nope! Can she point you to Jesus? Yes! Can she help you find the depth of the character of this Forever Friend? Yes, Yes. So, you know what, people have forever done for me? They cut me slack. No one ever came to me through journey of this life and said, 'Dwight, boy! You've got to believe!' You know what they have done? All along the way they have been so gracious, they said listen, check it out for yourself. You examine and see, you read, you think. You conclude. My friend, that is exactly what I want to do with you.

### Survey Research:

Now, I need to tell you, I'm not alone with this kind of a testimony. There are millions of people today who have been similarly effected. In fact, I want to share some dynamite research that's been done. Two friends of mine, both researchers, Dr. Roger Dudley and Dr. Desmond Cummings Jr., surveyed more than 8,200 Seventh-day Adventists and 193 churches just in North America. They were examining twenty different categories of spiritual life. One of the questions asked 'Are you a regular reader of Ellen White?' Now, a stunning 82% of regular readers of Ellen White express their relationship with Jesus as "intimate." The figure was only 56% for non-readers of Ellen White, a 26% difference. 82% of the readers of Ellen White indicated a high degree of the assurance of being right with God, compared to 56% of non-readers. There is more. Readers of Ellen White were 24% more involved in Christian outreach and service than non-readers. One more, here's the blockbuster. Listen to this, 82% of those who read Ellen White had a daily personal Bible study as compared to 47% of the non-readers, exactly the opposite effect as false prophets tend to have on their followers.

False prophets draw you away from the Book. But this research shows empirically that the more they read of this woman's writings, the deeper they are in the Scripture. Ladies and gentlemen, let the numbers speak for themselves. In every one of the 20 spiritual life categories surveyed, the regular readers of Ellen White scored higher than the non-readers. Let me read a quotation, the conclusion of the researchers: 'Seldom does a research study find the evidence so heavily weighted toward one conclusion. In the church growth survey on every single item that deals with personal attitudes or practices of spiritual life, the members who regularly studied Ellen White's books tend to rank higher than do the members who read them only occasionally or never.'

### Is She a Prophet?

Does she pass the four critical tests that the Bible declares must be applied to a prophet? Beyond a question for me she does. What are those four tests? Lets look at them:

Does the prophet's predictions come true?

Do they agree with Scripture?



Are they Christ centered?

Is their lifestyle consistent with Jesus?

I have found that to be yes, yes, yes, and yes. But my friends, I must do for you what others have done for me as I mentioned just a moment ago. Simply invite you to examine the evidence for yourself. You read, you think, you ask, and you see. The fact of the matter is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has never required those who join its community of faith to believe and accept the writings of Ellen White prior to making that commitment. This is a journey; you take the journey, you take your time. But I'm saying my friend, you're reading the tabloids, you're watching TV, they're giving you all this psychic stuff and you are eating it up. You owe it to yourself to read from someone who has passed the four tests, and has writing now that can lead you to the Jesus she fell deeply in love with. She is not the Bible. She never will be the Bible. But is it possible that God raised her up to lead a people back to the Book just before the return of Christ?

**Final Appeal:**

I want to end with a text: 2 Chron. 20:20. This is a wonderful promise, and I leave you with it tonight. It's a story. They rose up early in the morning, they went out to the wilderness of Tekoa, they went out to battle in their choir robes: "So they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; Believe His prophets and you shall prosper.'"

In the Book you and I have been studying in the Next Millennium Seminar, we have been given everything we need to be firmly established and truly prosper. But God has also given us His prophets, never to draw a following after themselves but always with a passionate echo of His own love calling the human race, "Come to Me. Find a forever friendship with Me." My friends, for the sake of that friendship, God has sent us His prophets. For the sake of His friendship, why would we not believe them?

## C. Approach of Pastor Skip MacCarty's Bible Marking Class for New Members

## #25 Prophets - True and False

- 1Pt - Acts 3:19-21      Throughout the Old Testament period, God spoke to the world through prophets.
- 2Pt - Amos 3:7      Through His prophets, God will inform the world of His every major intervention into world affairs.
- 3Pt - Ephesians 4:7,8,11-13      God ordained that there be prophets in the New Testament period as well as in the Old. God made provision to speak through prophets whenever and wherever He chose to bring us into maturity in Christian unity and godly character, to the very end of time.
- 4Pt - Revelation 12:17  
5Pt - Revelation 19:10      God's people in the last day will "have the testimony of Jesus Christ" which "is the spirit of prophecy."
- 6Pt - 2 Kings 22:14  
7Pt - Acts 21:8,9      God's prophets in both the Old Testament and New Testament included women as well as men. Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) was prophesying at the same time that Jeremiah was. For mention of other women prophets see: Exodus 15:20 (Miriam); Judges 4,5 (Deborah); Nehemiah 6:14 (Noadiah); Luke 2:36-38 (Anna); etc.
- 8Pt - 1 Corinthians 11:4,5      Instructions are given as to how men and women in the days of Paul were to pray and prophesy.
- 9Pt - 2 Chronicles 20:20      Spiritual prosperity results from believing God's prophets.
- 10Pt - Matthew 24:23,24      There are false prophets as well as true.

Following are five Bible tests of a true prophet:

- 11Pt - Deuteronomy 18:21,22      1. *A true prophet's predictions come to pass.* This test of a true prophet immediately weeds out most false prophets who have only a small percentage of their predictions that actually come to pass. But even if the predictions of one who claims to be a prophet do come to pass, they still do not qualify as a true prophet if they do not teach the truth.
- 12Pt - Deuteronomy 13:1-3
- 13Pt - 2 Timothy 3:15,16      2. *A true prophet has complete confidence in the reliability of God's word in the Bible.*
- 14Pt - Isaiah 8:20  
15Pt - Acts 17:11      3. *A true prophet speaks in harmony with the Bible and expects to be tested by the Bible.*
- 16Pt - 1 John 4:1-3      4. *A true prophet's message will focus on Jesus.*
- 17Pt - Matthew 7:15-20      5. *A true prophet's life and works will bear good fruit.*



## A Prophetic Witness in Our Modern Day

On the basis of the five Bible tests of a true prophet, Seventh-day Adventists have recognized the true prophetic gift operating in and through the life and work of Ellen G. White who, from the age of 17 until she died 70 years later in 1915, testified to having received from God approximately 2000 visions and dreams, visions that varied in length from less than a minute to nearly four hours.

Having received only a third grade formal education, Ellen White was nonetheless empowered by the Holy Spirit to author 5000 articles and 26 books during her lifetime, including compilations from her 55,000 pages of manuscript, with more than 100 titles now available in English. She may well be the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. All of her writings are rooted in Scripture and deeply Christ centered. Her life-changing masterpiece on successful Christian living, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in more than 135 languages. Among her many writings are a five-volume devotional commentary on the Bible as well as books on health, Christian education, family life, gospel ministry, mission and evangelism. Her passion was to see the entire world reached with the everlasting gospel of Christ in preparation for His soon return.

Through her humble, Spirit-led leadership, she helped raise up the Christian movement that today offers the largest Protestant educational system (over 5,500 schools and 80 colleges and universities which serve nearly a million students) and the most extensive Protestant health system (157 hospitals and sanitariums, 350 medical clinics and 30 medical planes that reach people in third world countries who otherwise would have no medical care, and 99 retirement homes and orphanages) in the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is in more countries today than any other Protestant church on earth (207 of the 233 countries recognized by the UN). Besides its expansive mission program, the church is involved in over a quarter of a billion dollars of charity work annually, and, in addition, it operates ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency), an extensive humanitarian aid program that ministers annually to the felt needs of many millions of impoverished people around the world. This expansive ministry is due in large part to the sanctified vision, testimony and personal example of Ellen G. White.

Two additional handouts are provided with this study on "Prophets - True and False." The one entitled, "The inspiration and authority of the Ellen G. White writings," explains the role of her writings, compared with the role of the Bible, in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The other is a chart showing the results of an extensive survey on the spiritual life of Seventh-day Adventists. This research, conducted by Drs. Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, examined 20 different categories of spiritual life, including a question on whether those surveyed were regular readers of the writings of Ellen G. White or not. After compiling the results, the researchers concluded: "Seldom does a research study find the evidence so heavily weighted toward one conclusion. In the church growth survey, on *every single item* that deals with personal attitudes or practices [of spiritual life], the member who regularly studies Ellen White's books tends to rank higher than does the member who reads them only occasionally or never." This result is consistent with Jesus' revelation that a true prophet's work will bear good fruit in the lives of those who are influenced by it (Matthew 7:15-20).



# The inspiration and authority of the Ellen G. White writings

10

## A statement of present understanding.

In response to requests, a statement on the relationship of the writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible was prepared initially by an ad hoc committee of the General Conference. The statement was published in the July 15 *Adventist Review* and August issue of *MINISTRY* with an invitation to readers to respond to it. Suggestions from readers and from several groups have led to a refinement of the statement to its present form. Although it is not a voted statement, we believe that the worldwide participation in its development makes it a reflection of the views of the church on the topic it addresses.—Biblical Research Institute.

**I**n the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at Dallas in April, 1980, the Preamble states: "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures." Paragraph one reflects the church's understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, while paragraph seventeen reflects the church's understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White in relation to the Scriptures. These paragraphs read as follows:

### "1. The Holy Scriptures

"The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)"

### "17. The Gift of Prophecy

"One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is

prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)"

The following affirmations and denials speak to the issues which have been raised about the inspiration and authority of the Ellen White writings and their relation to the Bible. These clarifications should be taken as a whole. They are an attempt to express the present understanding of Seventh-day Adventists. They are not to be construed as a substitute for, or a part of, the two doctrinal statements quoted above.

### Affirmations

1. We believe that Scripture is the divinely revealed Word of God and is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2. We believe that the canon of Scripture is composed only of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

3. We believe that Scripture is the foundation of faith and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.

4. We believe that Scripture is the Word of God in human language.

5. We believe that Scripture teaches that the gift of prophecy will be manifest in the Christian church after New Testament times.

6. We believe that the ministry and writings of Ellen White were a manifestation of the gift of prophecy.

7. We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of that inspiration, are applicable and authoritative, especially to Seventh-day Adventists.

8. We believe that the purposes of the Ellen White writings include guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings, with

prophetic urgency, to the spiritual and moral life.

9. We believe that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

10. We believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants finds parallels in some of the writings of the Bible.

### Denials

1. We do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture.

2. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are an addition to the canon of Sacred Scripture.

3. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White function as the foundation and final authority of Christian faith as does Scripture.

4. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White may be used as a basis of doctrine.

5. We do not believe that the study of the writings of Ellen White may be used to replace the study of Scripture.

6. We do not believe that Scripture can be understood only through the writings of Ellen White.

7. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White exhaust the meaning of Scripture.

8. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are essential for the proclamation of the truths of Scripture to society at large.

9. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are the product of mere Christian piety.

10. We do not believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants negates the inspiration of her writings.

We conclude, therefore, that a correct understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White will avoid two extremes: (1) regarding these writings as functioning on a canonical level identical with Scripture, or (2) considering them as ordinary Christian literature.



## APPENDIX A

## PASTOR'S PASTOR



**T**hroughout my entire Christian walk, I have been personally blessed by the prophetic gift to the Seventh-day Adventist

church in the ministry and writings of Ellen White. For nearly three decades, it has been my privilege to introduce thousands of individuals attending our evangelistic series to this unique ministry that has so encouraged me.

Many years ago, I joined several leaders in requesting the production of a book especially designed to introduce Ellen White's ministry to new and potential members. In our meetings, we have distributed thousands of copies of the book *Gift of Light*, authored by my colleague, Roger Coon.

Far from being an issue that we ought to downplay or ignore in public evangelistic preaching, I have discovered that an open presentation of spiritual gifts along with the specifics of how Ellen White's ministry has blessed our denomination, is welcomed by those who hear me preach.

While firmly holding to *sola scriptura* as the only basis of doctrine, I can readily affirm the biblical benefits promised through spiritual gifts to the church. Furthermore, in an age in which almost any charlatan can claim a prophetic voice and be readily heard, it is both enlightening and encouraging to new and potential members that the same Scriptures which warn of the last-days proliferation of false prophets also promise the prophetic gift's presence in the remnant people.

Also, as a pastor-evangelist, I have both the privilege and the responsibility to introduce and instruct my members and potential converts in all the blessings available to God's people. In presenting this subject, several principles readily awaken the attention as well as build confidence in the validity of this genuine spiritual gift:

## The gift that keeps giving

JAMES A. CRESS

**Emphasize Biblical authority.** The Scriptures provide humanity with the knowledge necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus and they are the infallible revelation of His will, the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.

**Teach your personal experience.** You can never credibly teach something you do not experience. If you have not bathed your mind in such classics as *Desire of Ages*, *Steps to Christ*, *Acts of the Apostles*, or *The Great Controversy*, you likely will fail to convince others of their validity or benefit.

**Preach a benefit not a feature.** The gift of prophecy is far more than just a doctrinal feature to be found in our fundamental beliefs. The leadership ministry and writing heritage of Ellen White have benefitted and blessed this movement much more strongly than just a proof-text answer for our claims to be the remnant movement.

**Advocate experimentation rather than compliance.** The Bible says, "Taste of the Lord and see that He is good." Ellen White, herself stated, "Some are unacquainted with me and my labors, and they are very skeptical of anything bearing the name of visions. This is all natural, and can be overcome only by experience. If persons are not settled in regard to the visions, they should not be crowded off."<sup>1</sup> My personal recommendation to "taste and see" has awakened the interest of many to experience the blessings I have enjoyed.

**Show the Bible tests of genuine gifts.** Just as the Scriptures warn of false prophets and false gifts, so tests of genuine prophetic claims are given. The Bible states that the gift of

prophecy will be present in the church of the last days, it warns that while multiplicities of counterfeits will arise, the genuine will shine through, and it affirms various evidences that can be evaluated by investigation and experiential seeking for God's will. "Don't turn away God's Spirit or ignore prophecies. Put everything to the test. Accept what is good, and don't have anything to do with evil," (1 Thess. 5:19-22, CEV).

**Prove the gift by its fruit.** For my personal life, this gift of prophetic guidance has grown to an authoritative role, not because I advocate that something beyond Scripture is needed or even because I am convinced that Ellen White's ministry meets the criteria of a genuine prophet. She herself said, "God's Word is the unerring standard. The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. . . . Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God."<sup>2</sup> However, when I read her works, I want to know more about Jesus. I hunger to know more of the Bible. I revel in magnificent promises of God's providence and increasing confidence in God's leading for the future. The fruits prove the genuine far better than any argument or debate.

**Uplift the certainty of Jesus' triumph.** As you lift up Jesus before your hearers through the great themes of God's saving grace through Jesus' atonement, His victory over death, His continuing ministry on our behalf, His love for and spiritual gifts to His church, and the ultimate triumph of God's love when Jesus returns to restore all things, you will see the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in your own life, your congregation, and in the lives of your members. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 259.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 256.