

Adventist Today



Adventist Today @atoday • 1h



100 Years After Ellen White. #centurylater,
#propheticvoice, #tiredofwaiting



Adventist Today @atoday • 2h

Desmond Ford, Olive Hemmings,
Jenniffer Ogden, Loren Seibold,
Alden Thompson, Gilbert M. Valentine,
Winona Winkler Wendth, Zane Yi





features

4 She Kept Us Protestant

By Loren Seibold

7 How Ellen White Went From Inspired Guide to Final Word

By Gilbert M. Valentine

10 Ellen White, Virgin Mary, and the Feminization of the Church

By Jennifer Ogden

12 Why Ellen White Didn't Speak Strongly in Favor of Women's Ordination

By Olive J. Hemmings

14 Ellen White's Most Significant Contribution to Adventist Theology

By Zane Yi

16 A Good Pastor, But Not an Infallible Exegete

By Desmond Ford

18 A Great Cradle

By Winona Winkler Wendth

20 The Jesus Christ Estate: A Speculative Parable

By Carey Constantine (a pseudonym)

22 Ellen White on Ellen White

DEPARTMENTS

3 Editorial

Introducing a New Editor: Loren Seibold

By Monte Sahlin

24 Alden Thompson

How Long, Oh Lord?

30 Letters

31 Adventist Man

The LOAF Project

Adventist Today

Executive Editor

Loren Seibold

Copy Editor

Debra J. Hicks

Contributing Editors

James Walters

John McLarty

J. David Newman

Art Director

Chris Komisar

Online Editors

Managing Editor: Jeff Boyd

Features: Debbonnaire Kovacs

Commentary: Mark Gutman

Poetry and the Arts: Debbonnaire Kovacs

Reviews: Edwin A. Schwisow

Web Coordinator: Heather Gutman

Facebook Editor: Emmy Halvorsen

Executive Director

Monte Sahlin

Executive Secretary of Development

Edwin A. Schwisow

FOUNDATION BOARD

Nate Schilt, Jim Walters, Monte Sahlin, Andrew Clark, Keith Colburn, Chris Daley, Larry Downing, John Hoehn, Edmond Jones, Mailen Kootsey, Keisha McKenzie, Chuck Mitchell, Jim Nelson, Warren Nelson, Chris Oberg, Gene Platt, E. Gary Raines, Paul Richardson, Sasha Ross, Dan Savino, Loren Seibold, J. Gordon Short, James Stirling, Eldon Stratton, Ervin Taylor, David Van Putten, John Vogt

SENIOR LIFETIME ADVISORS

(\$25,000+)

Elwin Dunn, Patricia & Douglas Ewing, Kathi & Richard Guth, John Hoehn, Judy & John Jacobson, Al Koppel, Joan Ogden, Lori & Thaine Price, Judy & Gordon Rick, J. Gordon Short, Marilyn & Ervin Taylor, Nancy & John Vogt, Priscilla & James Walters

LIFETIME ADVISORS (\$10,000+)

Jane Bainum, Susan & Hernan Barros, Kelli & Robert Black, Ginny & Todd Burley, Pat & Ron Cople, Kathryn & James Dexter, Rosemary & Merlyn Duerksen, Dan Engeberg, Sandra & Sam Geli, Patricia Hare, Marielynn & Edwin Hill, Carmen & Clive Holland, Erika & Brian Johnson, Carmen & Yung Lau, David T. Person II, Patricia Phillips, R. Marina & E. Gary Raines, Judith Rausch, Stewart Shankel, James Stirling

UNDERWRITING ADVISORS

(\$2,500+ DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS)

L. Humberto Covarrubias, William Garber, Lucille Lorenz, Betty Webster

GENERAL ADVISORS

(\$500+/YEAR PLAN)

Connie Anderson, W. L. Asher, M.D., Cherry Ashlock, Almon J. Balkins, Diana & Ken Bauer, Charlotte & Robert Brody, Ruth Christensen & Glenn Henriksen, Beverly & Sidney Christiansen, Anders & Debra Engdahl, Ed Fry, William Garber, Karita & DeWitt Goulbourne, Dolores & Robert Hasse, Jackie & Jim Henneberg, Catherine Lang-Titus, Donna & Leroy Lowrie, Lyndon Marter, Charles & Joan Mitchell, Michael & Corinne Pestes, Ruth & Beryl Rivers, Debi & E. Arthur Robertson, Gary Russell, Gretchen & Monte Sahlin, Elmar Sakala, Beverly & David Sandquist, Dee Dee & Nate Schilt, Barbara & Eldon Stratton, Robert Tandy, Alden Thompson, Jackie & Hal Williams

Adventist Today brings contemporary issues of importance to Adventist church members and is a member of The Associated Church Press. Following basic principles of ethics and canons of journalism, this publication strives for fairness, candor, and good taste. Unsolicited submissions are encouraged. Payment is competitive. Send an email to atoday@atoday.org or mail to: *Adventist Today*, PO Box 1135, Sandy, OR 97055-1135. Voice: (503) 826-8600 Website: atoday.org.

As an independent press, *Adventist Today* relies on donations to meet its operating expenses. To make a donation, go to www.atoday.org or mail to *Adventist Today*, PO Box 1135, Sandy, OR 97055-1135. Thanks for supporting *Adventist Today* with your regular tax-deductible donations.

Adventist Today (ISSN 1079-5499) is published quarterly by Adventist Today Foundation, 50800 SE Baty Rd, Sandy, OR 97055. Annual subscriptions \$29.50 (\$50/2 years) for individuals. \$40 for institutions. (Payment by check or credit card.) Add \$10 for address outside North America. Periodical postage paid at Sandy, Oregon, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Adventist Today*, P.O. Box 1135, Sandy, OR 97055-1135. Copyright © 2016 by Adventist Today Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering open dialogue in the Adventist community.



Introducing a New Editor: Loren Seibold

By Monte Sahlin

The publishers are very pleased to announce that Dr. Loren Seibold is the new executive editor for *Adventist Today*. He replaces J. David Newman as the primary editor of the magazine but will have a wider range of responsibilities for the full menu of paper, digital, and social media that we publish.

Both Loren and his wife, Carmen, are Seventh-day Adventist ministers. He is a church pastor in Ohio. She is a hospital chaplain currently on staff with Mount Carmel Hospice.

Both grew up in the Adventist faith, he on a farm in North Dakota and she in Cuba and then California (where my mother was Carmen's fourth-grade teacher!). The international family that is the global Adventist community brought them together at Walla Walla College. Carmen completed the M.Div. at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and Loren earned his M.Div. at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. They are both dedicated gardeners, readers, and travelers.

Loren's byline is well known among Adventists and in wider circles. He has been published in *Reader's Digest*, *Christianity Today*, *Signs of the Times*, *Leadership*, *Virtue*, *Liberty*, the *Adventist Review*, the Adult Sabbath School Quarterly, *Ministry*, *Adventist Heritage*, *Insight*, *Quiet Hour*, and *Spectrum*. He has even written about gardening for *The American Rose Society*. His book titled *A God We Can Trust*, published by Pacific Press, is a reflection on the Christian response to the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, 2001. We received many congratulations from readers once the word went out this fall that he had joined the *Adventist Today* team.

Comfortable with the creation of digital media, Loren was from 2007 through 2012 the founding editor of *Best Practices for Adventist Ministry*, the

digital newsletter for the Ministerial Association of the North American Division.

From 1995 to 1998 he was a regular commentator on KQED, the public radio station in San Francisco, while he was pastor of the Adventist church in Palo Alto and earning a Doctor of Ministry degree at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Prior to that, he was a pastor in the Dakota Conference and was creator and editor of *Praxis*, a journal for pastors sponsored by the Mid-American Union.

The mission of *Adventist Today* continues to be the same: to provide professional journalism for the wider Adventist community, focusing on the Adventist faith with a full range of information and opinion for our readers. Unlike other publications and media, we have no institutional or organizational interests, no constituency or ideology or agenda. We exist for one reason only: to serve our readers.

In a recently completed survey of our readers, more than 7 out of 10 said, "I am an Adventist by faith and care about the future of my church." Another one in five indicated that they are not currently active Adventist church members but are regular readers because of family history, friends and relatives, or an interest in trends in the Adventist movement.

Asked what they expect *Adventist Today* to do for them, our readers indicated a very strong demand (76 to 90 percent) for three things: (1) Provide objective, honest journalism; (2) Publish responsible opinion from a wide range of Adventist viewpoints; and (3) Monitor trends and long-term issues in the development of the Adventist movement. I am still sifting through hundreds of specific suggestions that readers took the time to offer through this survey.

Continued on page 28

We received many congratulations from readers once the word went out this fall that he had joined the *Adventist Today* team.

SHE KEPT US PROTESTANT

by Loren Seibold



It seems significant to me that so much of *The Great Controversy*, the book that more than any other shapes our Seventh-day Adventist sectarian identity, is devoted to the Protestant Reformation. Though it often uses the Reformation to accuse Roman Catholicism, it also shows Protestantism as a moving, evolving faith, from a place of religious formalism and cruel certainty to a lively interaction with God. *The Great Controversy*, at least in its first part, makes a compelling case for progressive truth. One faithful movement succeeds another, each fighting against religion's natural tendency to smugness under authority and, at the same time, challenging Christians to new depths of understanding from the Holy Scriptures and (crucially) applying faith to life under the guidance of the Spirit.

In the first chapter of *The Kingdom of God in America*, H. Richard Niebuhr reminds us that Protestantism is by definition a dynamic movement, one that engages with God through Scripture and experience. Protestantism is “the apprehension of God’s primacy, immediacy and nearness”¹ he writes, in a way that Catholicism wasn’t. “Catholic” is the church universal and ultimately authoritative, but “protestant” is process. “Catholic” speaks to the completeness and perfection of God’s authority on this Earth; “protestant” speaks to its evolution.

Many Seventh-day Adventists still think that our beliefs came into being through a simple, linear process, like a child assembling a Lego toy by looking at the picture on the box. But dozens of Adventist histories have by now proven that it was in fact quite protestant—which is to say, untidy and contentious. Evolution is unwelcome among us as a model for the origin of life, but it is necessary to explain the development of our movement. Among the early Adventists, new ideas formed and flared, and believers that didn’t catch fire died out. Those who weren’t willing to follow the new narratives dropped away—including William Miller, the most important figure in the Advent movement—leaving the rest to write the history. What was left was vitalized and vitalizing, something we who love this church still remember today.

And the most dynamic element in this protestant process was Ellen White.

Ellen White Was a Reinventor

In popular culture, you’ll occasionally hear an especially enduring public figure—entertainer, businessman, politician, etc.—described as “reinventing” himself or herself. Such persons build on their established reputation as they risk new expressions and try out new ideas and methods. Ellen White was one such reinventor. She begins her career by explaining to the disappointed Millerites what

had really happened to them, from heaven's point of view. She adds the Sabbath—not merely adjunctive, but necessary to Jesus' return. Apocalyptic expectancy and Sabbath obedience become ingredients for an exclusivist identity. She weighs in on church organization, personal spirituality, and biblical interpretation. As the years pass, she throws unexpected new ideas into the mix, such as health as an expression of faith. In midlife she develops her earlier apocalypticism into *The Great Controversy*, her masterwork of history, eschatology, and Adventist identity. She pushes back against the denomination's growing legalism with righteousness by faith. Late in life she challenges authoritative church government, demanding reorganization.

You'll correctly object here that rarely did Ellen White invent an entirely new element of Adventist doctrine. What she did was turbocharge good ideas by her prophetic endorsement. At other times, she steered us clear of dangerous dead ends.² Her guidance earned her the reputation of theologian-in-chief, even when her best ideas came from others; later, as the brethren became increasingly arrogant and the church increasingly institutionalized, she became the protester-in-chief, to the point of annoying her fellow church leaders.

And then Ellen White died, and the directive, affirming, challenging voice was gone. You'll read elsewhere in this issue Gilbert Valentine's account of how Ellen White's counsel assumed a quasi-Scriptural authority soon after her death. Dynamic interaction with God turned into settled orthodoxy. We were no longer in conversation with God through Ellen White, but archaeologists of what she'd left behind.

We Seventh-day Adventists still occasionally mention progressive truth—so important to our pioneers—but we rarely practice it anymore. Our theological edifice has been built, and while we may patch the roof or repair a window, we don't remodel. Can you imagine our church embracing a new prophet who appeared among us now, unless he or she had nothing new to say? Our "present truth" is something that we received more than 100 years ago. *The Great Controversy* says that we are the product of the Reformation, but we are no longer readily reformable. We have thought of ourselves as the final version, the top step, the apex. The weakness in *The Great Controversy* scenario is its insistence that the only thing allowed to succeed the kingdom of Seventh-day Adventists will be the kingdom of God. It's been 100 years since we lost Ellen White, and our successor hasn't arrived yet.

What Aging Religious Organizations Do

Perhaps what troubled us about the women's ordination debate was that it proceeded so unprotestantly, with such an anemic sense

of God's dynamic presence. The Theology of Ordination Study Committee looked inward and backward, at the texts, at what the institution could bear, but not outward for God's activity among us in a new millennium. We studied words (the number of books generated on the theology of women's ordination in a brief period was astonishing) rather than checking to see if the Holy Spirit was working right now in the lives of called women. In the end, we did precisely what the original Protestant reformers had protested: we let the top level of our institution decide God's will. At San Antonio we showed that we have in the General Conference an authority every bit as infallible as the one in Rome, even if ours speaks only once every five years.³ Inasmuch as we have objected to the Roman Catholic church's using councils to decide doctrines, why did we

We have thought of ourselves as the final version, the top step, the apex. The weakness in *The Great Controversy* scenario is its insistence that the only thing allowed to succeed the kingdom of Seventh-day Adventists will be the kingdom of God.

rely on that process to find God's will for our denomination?

Simple answer: it's because that's what aging religious organizations do. Very few established churches have shown themselves capable of continuing to be as responsive to God's dynamic leading as they were when founded.

The Forgotten Essence of Protestantism

Niebuhr discusses at length what he calls our "Protestant Dilemma." In order to survive, Protestantism had to "move from protest and criticism to construction." Yet "The new freedom was not self-organizing but threatened anarchy in every sphere of life. ... As a theory of *divine* construction the Protestant movement was hard put to it to provide principles for human construction."⁴ The new organizations with their creeds and religious offices clung to Protestant doctrines, but "Insofar as [Protestantism] was a dynamic manifestation of the Christian faith it was in opposition

to the static form which faith had assumed in the church; insofar as it became static in turn it had little if any advantage of its Catholic “rival.”⁵

That is to say, we Protestant churches have never been good at practicing protestancy.

It’s important to remember that “Reformation” is an inaccurate description of the event that bears the name. The Reformation never actually reformed the parent church. The Reformation was a series of revolutions, at the completion of which each new version of Protestantism clarified and codified and creedified itself, then invested in structure intellectual, human, and real, by which time, according to Niebuhr, “the construction was

True Protestants are not merely those who once protested, but who are still protesting, *ecclesia semper reformanda*, always alert for the new word from heaven that will jolt us up off of the sofa of God’s drawing room and drive us out into the world with more good news.

then no longer Protestant,”⁶ but had the personality features of Catholicism, sans its precise doctrines. Which then invited more revolutions.

Traveling in Mexico years ago, I learned about the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). The PRI began, as its name says, with a revolution, and it continued to speak in revolutionary terms. But a half-century after its founding, there was nothing even vaguely revolutionary about it. It was only interested in what a revolution in the past had won, gains which it had by then institutionalized and corrupted. Though it pretended to be democratic, it controlled the country with an iron fist for 71 years. Journalists nicknamed it “the perfect dictatorship.” The PRI went out of its way to be sure that no one ever thought revolutionary thoughts: it controlled news, rigged elections, and used force when necessary.


We, too, might want to be cautious about speaking of ourselves as a reformational movement if we no longer practice the essence of protestantism: openness to change and to continuing instruction from God. True Protestants are not merely those who once protested, but who are still protesting, *ecclesia semper reformanda*, always alert for the new word from heaven that will jolt us up off of the sofa of God’s drawing room and drive us out into the world with more good news.

What Can We Expect?

But in a post-Ellen world, now encumbered with properties and employees and investments, with bylaws and policy books and a net worth, we’ve found that nearly impossible. And from a human point of view, it is unfair to expect it, as unfair as expecting an elderly person to have the same openness to change as a teenager. Writes Niebuhr, “We shall look in vain if we seek to find in the Protestant ecclesiastical institutions the characteristic features of the Protestant movement; if they are there at all they appear in a form which denies as much as it represents the original intention.”⁷

Still, it’s a great disappointment. I wish we’d been the exception. I wish we had shown onlookers a better example of dynamic protestantism during our women’s ordination discussion, especially since our original change agent was a godly woman.

We can praise God that, thanks to Ellen White, we were for most of a century the most protestant church in America. And perhaps that’s all we can expect. Perhaps, if the pattern holds, another revolution awaits, a new voice speaking for God, a voice we might not listen to but that will go on to influence the world anyway.

But let’s not be too hard on ourselves. We’re just growing old. 

¹ *The Kingdom of God in America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), p. 27.

² An example of the latter is Ellen White’s refusal to advocate for the flat Earth, in spite of the urging of Alexander Gleason, a convinced believer in western New York, and Milton Charles Wilcox, the editor of *Present Truth* in England. For more information, see Loren Seibold, “Is the Bible from Heaven? Is the Earth a Globe,” in *Adventist Heritage*, Spring 1992, pp. 26-29 (available for online study at <http://tinyurl.com/LSeibold1>).

³ Of the strong-arming by some of the reformers, Niebuhr writes, “They seemed to believe that since the exercise of absolute power by the papal church was wrong, its exercise by the opponents of the papacy was right.” *The Kingdom of God in America*, p. 29.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 28.

HOW ELLEN WHITE WENT FROM INSPIRED GUIDE TO FINAL WORD

by Gilbert M. Valentine

Just how should the voice of Ellen G. White be heard in the life of the contemporary Adventist church a century after her death?

Among the families in my home church in the 1950s and 1960s, in small-town North New Zealand, there was no question that her voice was dominant and authoritative. Her words were always quoted to settle an argument. Should the elder be able to stand to offer prayer in church service, or must he always kneel? Was it OK to take on debt to put up a new church building? If you couldn't go into debt, then was it acceptable to have a fundraising "church fair" for the new

building? What did Sister White have to say? Some members always knew—or thought they did—and that settled it! Her voice determined every major issue and most minor ones, and she had to be followed because she was inspired.

For the people in my home church, her inspiration was what gave her authority. If she was inspired, she was wise, gave valuable counsel, and never wrote a mistake. She was always right—inerrant—in everything. At college in the mid-60s, my history professor would say that if Ellen White said an object was blue and my eyes said it was green, then if we really

believed in her inspiration, we would have to concede the object was blue. That is what being loyal to the Spirit of Prophecy meant, he said. Trust what God says, not your senses. It was only later that I learned that it was not nearly as simple as that; in fact, it was not simple at all.

Early Attempts to Correct Misconceptions

Even before Ellen White's death in 1915, and especially in the years immediately following, Adventist church leaders and pastors faced the difficult challenge of how, on the one hand, to affirm the

special quality of what Ellen White wrote and its value, and how, on the other hand, to acknowledge the complex human dimensions of her ministry and the limitations of her writings. In 1913, her son, W. C. White, tried to explain to delegates at the General Conference Session a more nuanced and constrained view of her authority. He pointed out that her writings could be corrected (the book *The Great Controversy* had recently been extensively revised) and that her writings

explanation and justification of the revisions that the Adventist church as a body did not hold to the view that the words were inspired. In this sense they did not believe in verbal inspiration, but in the very same statement they asserted that even if a word might not be correct, that did not mean that “an idea” might be wrong. Revision of grammar and words was to be done “without in any measure changing the thought.”² The ideas were always absolutely correct.

This inner circle of Adventist leaders valued and affirmed the special quality of Ellen White’s ministry, and they had a submissive spirit to her guidance, but, at the same time, they knew that its authority was not absolute. They knew that her writings did not sideline scholarship and research.

were not to be considered as authoritative to resolve scholarly questions of history or disputed points in other disciplines. But his explanations brought him severe criticism from conservative colleagues.¹ By that time, many in the church believed that his mother had been verbally inspired and, therefore, inerrant in all she had written. The opinion that she was unable to make a mistake was, in fact, actively fostered by most church leaders.

Thirty years earlier, in 1883, when church leaders first had to deal with the prospect of revisions to the language of Ellen White’s testimonies, they would affirm in their formal theological

According to this understanding, the words were not inerrant but the thoughts were. This belief later posed a significant problem for the church. It came to be a generally held view that no factual mistakes or inadequacies could be publicly identified or acknowledged in Ellen White’s writings. Certainly nothing of this nature could be discussed in church publications. What developed, therefore, was a concept that might be termed “practical inerrancy,” and that meant that a kind of absolute authority came to be attributed to her writings. Many highly esteemed leaders in the church, such as Stephen N. Haskell, fostered that view.³

Other church leaders who were familiar with the way Ellen White produced her books knew otherwise. General Conference President A. G. Daniells had seen the process of rewriting chapters of *The Desire of Ages*, and he had seen ideas change in the process. *Review and Herald* Editor W. W. Prescott, who had later helped to revise *The Great Controversy*, had seen “thoughts” change. General Conference Secretary W. A. Spicer had also been involved in the process of revision and knew that inadequate ideas and thoughts had to be modified. He was disappointed that a more public and frank acknowledgment of this had not been made when books were revised. This inner circle of Adventist leaders valued and affirmed the special quality of Ellen White’s ministry, and they had a submissive spirit to her guidance, but, at the same time, they knew that its authority was not absolute. They knew that her writings did not sideline scholarship and research, and explanations of her gift had to be nuanced.

W. C. White had tried to correct some of the wrong ideas about the nature of her authority. He wrote to Stephen Haskell pointing out the danger of “injuring” his mother’s work “by claiming for it more than she claims for it.” Verbal inspiration was not what she experienced, he explained. “We will make a great mistake,” he wrote, “if we endeavor to settle historical questions by the use of Mother’s books.”⁴ Prescott certainly felt that not enough was being done publicly to correct wrong impressions. Just months before Ellen White died, he remonstrated with W. C. White about the continued fostering of an over-idealized and less-than-honest portrayal by Elmshaven of the way his mother’s books and articles had been prepared for publication. He warned that unless the wrong impressions were

corrected, they would create a crisis of confidence in the community. He was right.⁵

Fearing a Loss of Confidence

In 1919, discussions about the nature and extent of Ellen White's authority took place at a special Bible and history teachers' conference in Washington D.C. But the warnings expressed by Daniells and Prescott made many church workers uncomfortable. They felt that this information would unsettle the confidence of church members, if it became broadly known. The report of the conference was therefore stored away in the church's archives until a more suitable time for wider dissemination might arrive. It didn't.⁶

In the decades that followed World War I, a strong fundamentalist reaction to modern understandings of science and to new social developments arose in large parts of the wider Christian world. Adventist leaders likewise felt it important to defend the faith and to push back against social and modernist intellectual trends. They did so by strongly asserting the authority of an infallible Scripture and by affirming the spiritual authority of Ellen White's prophetic gift and her role as an authoritative interpreter of Scripture. It was much simpler to reinforce the authority of the prophetic gift by saying that Ellen White was absolutely reliable and trustworthy in every word. In practice it was to be received as inerrant. Church leaders and teachers widely promoted what historian George Knight calls "verbalistic" views.⁷ Youth revivalist Luther Warren, for example, preached the inerrantist view far and wide at camp meetings and academies during the 1920s and 1930s, though it made leaders like Spicer and Daniells uncomfortable.⁸ Warren powerfully shaped the ideas of an entire generation, and inerrancy became normative. The

General Conference even sponsored a textbook for college Bible classes that said "the selection of the very words of Scripture in the original languages was over-ruled by the Holy Spirit."⁹ *Ministry* magazine promoted the idea that the Bible was a book of divine information "without a flaw or error in the documents" and that "even every incidental remark in the field of geology, cosmology, astronomy, and biology is true."¹⁰ And what was true of the inspiration of Scripture was also claimed for the inspiration of Ellen White.

In the well-intentioned promoting of the value and authority of Ellen White's work in the decades after her death, the church idealized her to the point that many believed that all she'd written came from visions. This was accompanied by a sanitizing of her story. Blemishes vanished from her books and her life—just abbreviated out or airbrushed away. She could not make a mistake. She was unable to explain or teach inadequately, much less be wrong. Not until the 1970s was this artificial "verbalistic" understanding challenged by scholars. Slowly a more true-to-life picture emerged. But in many parts of the church, the artificial understanding of Ellen White's authority still dominates, and today Seventh-day Adventists face a new danger as parts of the church move toward canonizing her work by including her words in the very pages of scripture, in such publications as the *Remnant Study Bible*.¹¹

Finding adequate and appropriate theological constructs to affirm both the special quality of the Ellen White writings and the realities of the complex flawed human dimensions of the phenomenon has proven particularly challenging for the church during the one hundred years since her death. The Seventh-day Adventist Church still faces the challenge of how to affirm and benefit from her

special contribution while at the same time recognizing its limitations. 📖

¹ W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, Dec. 31, 1913.

² "Whereas, We believe the light given by God to his servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed; Therefore — Resolved, That in the republication of these volumes such verbal changes be made as to remove the above-named imperfections [grammatical], as far as possible, without in any measure changing the thought." *Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883, p. 741.

³ Alberto Timm documents the widespread dominance of inerrantist views of both scripture and of Ellen White among the church's preachers, teachers, and authors during this period. He sees this as an inheritance from Millerism that was fostered in the early years of Adventism by such authors as Moses Hull and D. M. Canright, and later nurtured in the *Review* by periodic citations from authors such as Louis Gaussen and H. L. Hastings, both of whom advocated a Scripture without error. The same pattern dominated in the period after Ellen White's death. See Alberto R. Timm, "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000)" in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1/2 (1999), pp. 486-542.

⁴ W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Oct. 31, 1912.

⁵ W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, April 6, 1915. For a discussion of Prescott's letter on the misperceptions of Ellen White in the Church, see Gilbert Valentine, "The Church 'Drifting toward a Crisis': Prescott's 1915 letter to William White," *Catalyst*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2007.

⁶ The file of 2,400 typewritten pages (transcriptions of stenographic notes taken at the meetings) were kept in a vault at the General Conference. Their discovery in December of 1974 led to a sensation and cries of scandal. Extracts were first published in 1979 in *Spectrum*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1979, pp. 23-57. The papers are now available on the website of the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics.

⁷ George R. Knight has an extensive discussion of these trends in *Search for Identity* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2000) pp. 131-141.

⁸ Luther Warren was the original organizer of the Adventist Youth Society movement. Luther Warren to "Brother," Feb. 23, 1915; W. A. Spicer to Luther Warren, June 13, 1916.

⁹ B. L. House, *Analytical Studies in Bible Doctrines* (Washington, DC: General Conference Education Department, 1926) p. 66.

¹⁰ *Ministry*, June 1931, pp. 20-21.

¹¹ (Coldwater, MI: Remnant Publications, 2010).

ELLEN G. WHITE ISN'T A SAINT, IN THE Catholic sense. She is not venerated; she is not worshiped. Yet in the 100 years since her death, she has assumed saintly proportions within the Adventist movement. Today there's a wide variety of reactions at even the mention of her name.

The Blame Game

In some circles within Christendom, women and their feminizing influence have been pegged as the reason men are leaving the Christian church. With worship songs that speak of deep emotion, beautiful sanctuaries, and programming for children,

intercessor—can be maintained only by her status as a virgin. The Catholic Church claims that this purity preceded her and remained after the birth of the Savior. If Mary must remain pure for her life to have effectuality, we cannot be surprised that women today cannot be seen in the

ELLEN WHITE, VIRGIN MARY, AND THE FEMINIZATION OF THE CHURCH

BY JENNIFFER OGDEN

Some have a visceral reaction, an emotional nausea; others feel joyful; while still others are appreciative, though with a dose of hesitancy.

The General Conference Session of 2015 highlighted a complex and unclear understanding of gender within the denomination. That leaves us with the conundrum of dealing with Ellen White, a woman with dynamic influence and clear divine guidance. How do we tell women today that God cannot use them in the capacity of full pastoral ministry, when we have such clear evidence he has already done so within the Advent movement in the person of Ellen White?

the church is catering to women and has thus lost touch with the masculine, they say. Unable to reach the warrior heart of men with this soft-edged Christian faith, the feminine is blamed for shrinking churches. In *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity*,¹ Leon Podles attempts to discover the root of western Christianity's lack of appeal to men and lays the blame solidly on the feminine within the church.²

Ironically, Podles is Roman Catholic, a tradition that venerates the Virgin Mary, a figure in whom the feminine is deified. Mary is given the place of intercessor for humanity. In the typical prayer to Mary, the words imply this elevation of status by pleading with her to intercede on behalf of mankind. "Hail Mary, full of grace... Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Keeping Mary at a level ascribed biblically to Jesus—that of

same light, as none of us carry the virginal provenance, nor do we birth children conceived of the Spirit. The issue with women, then, is not their presence but their fallen state, their lack of purity. The false dichotomy of virgin/whore is set.³

Podles is not alone in this. David Murrow in *Why Men Hate Going to Church*⁴ draws this argument out of the Catholic realm and into evangelical Christianity. Though published six years after Podles, Murrow makes many of the same claims about the scarcity of men in church, suggesting that the common factor in growing churches is a strong male attendance, while declining churches all lack men. Again, a perceived

hyper-feminine model for church is blamed.

The problem with claiming that the feminization of faith is the reason why men shirk faith today is primarily that it is an old claim that has yet to be realized. Robert Warren Conant predicted the

directed her. Yet God is calling women today to roles that are very similar, which involve advocating for God's kingdom. We cannot lift up Ellen White as our version of the Virgin Mary while implying that all other women are not pure enough to follow in her footsteps. Ellen White and her

by God or, conversely, that they must be a diminishing force for their impurity.

A perfect God can use a broken humanity at any time, in any place, through any bias. Perhaps instead of fearing our differences, we can rather learn to use them to more fully share this



collapse of faith in his book *The Manly Christ: The New View*, way back in 1904. And yet there are still men in church.


To date, the feminine reach of Ellen White has not chased men out of our church. While she addresses deep emotions, the beauty of God, and the necessity for rich experience for families, her writings don't appeal solely to women. Their depth and breadth speak to any person intent on sharing a passion for God and for godly living.

Who God Chooses and Uses

In Adventism today, we risk the heresy of deifying Ellen White while not appreciating women in general. Ellen White had a distinct call from God on her life. She lived a life of courage, many times standing against the establishment of the denomination to advocate for God as he

prodigious writing can be honored for what it is: a call to walk with God. Neither Ellen nor her writings need be elevated to a status for worship, or discarded for fear of their female origin. We cannot embrace or reject *all* women within ministry, or the church at large, solely on the basis of gender. If God calls, we must answer.

Blaming the shrinking of churches on the feminization of Christianity is rooted in a dangerous idea. But it must not be used to diminish either the historic role of Ellen White or the current role of women serving as ministers. We dare not embrace the false idea that women must be pure and virginal in order to be used

great advent message with a world that is in great need of good news. 

¹ Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing, 1999).

² Podles points to three main sources for this creeping femininity: the writings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, scholasticism, and female monasticism.

³ Freud described this polarity in 1912 in "Über die allgemeinste Erniedrigung des Liebeslebens" [The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life], which he saw as a split between the affectionate and the sexual currents in male desire. It can be seen in individuals, where it may describe a man's adoration of his mother while denigrating the woman he sleeps with, but also in a larger sense in culture, where a female leader may be elevated as a maternal figure by those who love her, or despised as unworthy or even impure by those who do not.

⁴ David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2005).

WHY ELLEN WHITE DIDN'T SPEAK STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION

BY OLIVE J. HEMMINGS

Many Seventh-day Adventists today think that during Ellen White's lifetime her counsels received unmitigated acceptance by the denomination's leadership, which is why such heavy reliance upon her writings by those who oppose (or support) women's ordination seems to make sense. But what if that's not true?

In 1881 the General Conference Session deliberated on the issue of women's ordination. *The Signs of the Times* reports that the resolution was passed, while the *Review and Herald* reports that eight men discussed it and then referred it to a three-man General Conference committee.¹ Where was Ellen White in all of this? Why do we have no definitive word from her regarding this rigorously contested² 1881 General Conference issue?

The Big Picture

The historical records show that Ellen White was struggling to stand her ground and maintain her credibility in the midst of the internal upheavals and controversies that gripped the denomination for the better part of the 19th century.³ There was controversy over the way the church should organize, as well as over leadership, pantheism, and legalism,⁴ all exacerbated by the church's resistance to the women's movement. The prophet would have had difficulty making a call on what had become a culturally loaded and theologically beleaguered issue, in which she herself came under critical examination.

Between 1864 and the early 1900s, Ellen White came into sharp conflict with the leadership of the organized church. In 1901, the year she was sent to Australia (contrary to her own plans), friends even speculated that an attempt had been made on her life.⁵ The previous year she'd written the following to Uriah Smith: "My brethren have trifled and caviled and commented

and demerited, and picked and chosen a little and refused much until the testimonies mean nothing to them. ... I would, if I had dared, [have] given up this field of conflict long ago, but something has held me."⁶

After the death of her husband, James White, in August 1881, Ellen White came to play an increasingly prominent role in the church. However, with this prominence came increasing attacks on her authority and credibility. Richard Schwartz points out that Adventist ministers in the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands questioned the claims to her supernatural leading by God.⁷ He notes that during the 1890s, "Chief Australian dissidents advanced a series of wild charges against Ellen White (who was then ministering in Australia) that ranged from flagrant dishonesty to enriching herself at Adventists' expense."⁸

For her part, Ellen White had serious conflicts with the General Conference leadership regarding their style of leadership, the organization of the institution, and the decision-making



process. She went to California shortly after the death of James White in August 1881, just before the December 1881 General Conference that debated the issue of women's ordination. In 1883, Ellen White expressed her disapproval of the centralized management of the affairs of the church, by a handful of men who give others "no chance" to develop their God-given skills.⁹

Soon after the 1888 General Conference Session, Ellen White wrote: "Elder Butler ... has been in office three years too long and now all humility and lowliness of mind have departed from him. He thinks his position gives him such power that his voice is infallible."¹⁰ G.I. Butler had presided over the three-man General Conference committee that discussed the 1881 resolution to ordain women. In another statement regarding Butler's leadership, she stated: "I hope there will never be the slightest encouragement given to our people to put such wonderful confidence in finite erring man as has been placed upon Elder Butler in the past."¹¹ Later, in 1891, she reflected: "There were unfaithful stewards in responsible positions who appeared to sanction the propositions but who had not the least intention of carrying them out. They would do the opposite of that which came before them for their decisions. Therefore wrongs were practiced and evils were carried out in untruthful, deceptive lines. ... One or more men gave assent to measures laid out before the board or councils, but all the time they decided they would have their own way and carry out the matter as they chose."¹² "I was obliged to take the position that there was not the voice of God in the General Conference management and decisions. ... Many of the positions taken, going forth as the voice of the General Conference, have been the voice of one, two, or three men who were misleading the Conference."¹³

Tangled in a Cultural War

Central to the challenge to Ellen White's credibility and authority was the 19th-century cultural war over the women's movement, as well as the liberal pantheistic theology associated with it. The women's movement had been accused of ties with spiritualism, because some claimed religious authority through individual spiritual experience rather than through an official hierarchy or formal training.¹⁴ Some people associated the visionary experience of Ellen White with the mesmerism and clairvoyance of spiritualism, in which the human medium comes in contact with the spirit world.¹⁵ The visions were "so troubling to many" that in 1851 James White decided to suspend printing his wife's visions "to avoid arousing further controversy."¹⁶ James White and Ellen White found it necessary to distance themselves from what they, along with mainstream Protestantism, believed to be satanic spiritualism, and they took pains to explain Ellen White's experiences as visions from God.¹⁷ We can fully understand, then, why Ellen White would be as reticent as she was on issues associated with women's rights.

Ann Braude's study *Radical Spirits* says that though certain aspects of spiritualism overlapped with the women's movement, it was not a part of it.¹⁸ In fact, the revivalism of the Great Awakening in the 18th and 19th centuries gave many Christian women a public voice (where the culture had given them none), even leading to full ordination. Ellen White and several other 19th-century women rode this wave of revivalism.¹⁹ However, as is currently the case, the contemporary culture war became the Seventh-day Adventist Church's war, blunting the denomination's own prophetic edge.²⁰ Ellen White herself stood the risk of becoming a casualty of this conflict.

Worth a Second Look

It is in this context of challenge and struggle that one may interpret the case surrounding Ellen White's Ordained Minister Credentials.

That Ellen White received ministerial credentials in 1871 affirms that her role included more than just the prophetic. She functioned as a minister—teaching, preaching, and raising up churches, as was the nature of ministry in the church during its early history. She was issued a certificate labeled "Ordained Minister," similar to that given to all ordained ministers—including her husband, James White. Of the certificates issued to her beginning in 1871, six are extant. The term "Ordained Minister" was struck out on the 1885 certificate. However, it remained on other certificates. Why was "Ordained Minister" not struck out from these? Notwithstanding the explanations

Continued on page 28

ELLEN WHITE'S *Most Significant Contribution to* ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

by Zane Yi

"In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

When it comes to theology, a prophet doesn't need to be right about everything, just the important things. This seems to me a helpful *via media* between those who are eager to affirm and defend the truth of everything Ellen G. White wrote, and those who either ignore or reject everything she wrote. Very few people are wrong about everything they say, and no human is right about everything he or she says; the same holds true for Mrs. White.

The challenge, then, is not defending or deconstructing everything she uttered or penned, but discerning what to emphasize and appreciate. We need to recognize and separate theological gold from dross.

Many people seem to be drawn to the esoteric elements of her writings. By esoteric, I mean what she had to say about the end of the world, or riding bicycles, or what to eat for dinner. Such topics, and what one thinks about them, are certainly *interesting*, but are they essentially *important*?

Of course not. The heart of theology is its vision of God and how God saves. And what makes a theology Christian (rather than Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, or atheistic) is how God has done this through Jesus.

This seems like a rather basic point, but in Ellen White's time, the Adventist movement faced a genuine choice regarding these matters—the kind of choice that William James once described as “forced, living, and momentous.”¹ In many ways, the leaders of the fledgling denomination, in their eagerness to return to the pure teachings of Scripture and reject any (in their eyes) calcifying accretions of tradition, were left to reinvent the theological wheel, revisiting issues wrestled with and settled by the early church.

A Case in Point

One of the earliest theological controversies in the church had to do with the meaning of the word “begotten” in reference to Jesus' relationship to God. Jesus is referred to as “God's only-begotten son” in John 3:16. But what does this mean? Does “begotten” mean “created”? Some argued so. This would make Jesus literally a son of God the father, a creature, one who had a beginning. In the words of the Arians,² who championed this view, “There was a time when he [Jesus] was not.”

The other position was that a better translation for the term “begotten” is “generated,” as the light is generated by the sun. No metaphor is perfect, but the explanation goes that as the sun cannot be the sun without giving off light, the Father is not the Father without the Son. Therefore, the Son has always existed with the Father and is, therefore, uncreated.

Admittedly, all of this can seem rather arcane and, some might say, a good demonstration of the problem with theology. What's the relevance of all of this metaphysical speculation, especially in light of the very real problems confronting the world and the church? As Tara Burton notes, “The difference between whether—as was the case in the Arian controversy of the fourth-century AD—the Godhead should be thought of as powerful first, and loving second, or loving first and powerful second, might seem utterly pedantic in a world where plenty of people see no need to think about God at all.”³

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Still, this is an essential question about God that we shouldn't ignore. We might express it like this: which is more important, God's transcendence from the created order, or

God's intimacy with it? Does God, the source of all things, send someone else to do the difficult and dirty job of saving what has been wounded and broken? Or does God get involved?

As a relatively new parent, I can't help

Creator is not doing the saving.

It took the influence of a woman with a third-grade education to help them figure it out.⁶ "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived," she wrote in *The Desire of Ages*, a work that would go on to

The challenge, then, is not defending or deconstructing everything she uttered or penned, but discerning what to emphasize and appreciate. We need to recognize and separate theological gold from dross.


but think of caring for my daughter. When she cries out in the middle of inopportune moments for a bottle or diaper change, my love for her is expressed most powerfully in getting up and actually tending to her needs. My professions of love and affection for her don't amount to much if I send my spouse to do the all of the caretaking in the middle of the night. Standing over her crib, bleary-eyed and half-awake; cradling her; or cleaning her up says more than any words that come out of my mouth.

This is the main reason the church in the fourth century collectively opted for translating "begotten" as "generated." (Other factors played a role, of course.⁴) In the words of the Nicene Creed, Jesus is "the *only-begotten* Son of God...Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made...who for us...and our salvation, came down." This is the vision of God that has come to define the heart of Christian orthodoxy, one shared by all major branches of the Christian Church: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant.

Adventists, however, almost departed from this stream of thought. Many of our leaders initially sided with Arius' views of the Father and the Son, seemingly unaware of the logical contradiction of affirming this view and at the same time professing that "God saves"⁵—that if the Creator sends a mere creature to save other creatures, the

shape the thinking of many Adventists on this matter.⁷ Here she clearly sides with the bishops of Nicaea, and if it weren't for this, Adventism today would most likely not be a recognizable Christian denomination.

I realize this may sound like an odd claim, because her writings and their influence in the Adventist church are what cause some to categorize our community as a sect. This brings me back to my initial point: a prophet doesn't need to be right about everything, just the important things. Some may find the thought of looking to a prophet for theological guidance misguided, a category mistake. Prophets are not academic theologians, concerned about theory, theology, and doctrine. Rather, prophets specialize in orthopraxy, guiding a community in practical matters such as providing insights for living.

That's what Jesus, in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets, did. Yet, it is who we Christians affirm Jesus to be that gives his teaching and example its distinct authority in the church. Jesus is the revelation of God and his will rather than a revelation about God. And this is how we know that God is on the side of the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the sojourner. Our recognition that God calls his people to be concerned with "the least of these" is a direct result of who we understand Jesus ultimately to be. And on this issue, Ellen White, thankfully, got it right. 

¹ William James, "The Will to Believe," an address to the Philosophical Clubs of Yale and Brown Universities cited in *The New World*, June 1896.

² Arianism should not be confused with subordinationism, which has experienced a revival among those who champion a headship theology. While Arianism and subordinationism are not the same, they share a desire to preserve and emphasize the transcendence and authority of the Father.

³ Tara Isabella Burton, "Study Theology, Even If You Don't Believe in God," *The Atlantic* online, posted Oct. 30, 2013 (see <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/study-theology-even-if-you-dont-believe-in-god/280999/>).

⁴ See Philip Jenkins, *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

⁵ For example, J.N. Loughborough argued that the doctrine of the Trinity was "1. Contrary to common sense. 2. Contrary to Scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous." Similarly, R.F. Cottrell claimed that acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity was a sign of "intoxication from that wine of which all the nations have drunk." Both statements, along with the Arian views of other Adventist leaders, are cited in Gerhard Pfandl, "The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Seventh-day Adventists," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 160-179. Denis Fortin observes that "there is a resurgence of anti-Trinitarian views among Adventists. Some wish to reclaim the teachings of our Adventist pioneers on the Godhead and deny the full and eternally pre-existent deity of Jesus and the personal deity of the Holy Spirit." See Denis Fortin, "God, the Trinity, and Adventism: An Introduction to the Issues," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 4-10. See also Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002). Whidden observes that "not only are there increasing reports of pockets of anti-Trinitarian revival in various regions across North America, but via Internet its influence has spread around the world. As this grassroots Arian or anti-Trinitarian movement gains ground, local churches increasingly find themselves drawn into debate over the issues" (pp. 8-9).

⁶ Ellen White herself was influenced significantly on this issue by the teachings of W.W. Prescott. See Gil Valentine, "Clearer Views of Jesus and the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Spectrum Magazine*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Winter 2014), pp. 66-74.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898, 1940), p. 530. Even more explicitly, she states, "He [Jesus] is equal with God, infinite and omnipotent...He is the eternal self-existing Son." Manuscript 101, 1897, in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 12 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), p. 395. Cited in Pfandl, "The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Seventh-day Adventists".

A Good Pastor, But Not an Infallible Exegete

by Desmond Ford

“Let us remember that we are struggling and falling, failing in speech and action to represent Christ, falling and rising again, despairing and hoping.”¹

The woman who wrote that had to be an intelligent, mature Christian of wide experience. I esteem her accordingly and acknowledge a debt that I could never repay.

About 35 years ago, my denomination expelled me because I did not accept the writings of Ellen G. White as infallible interpretations of Scripture. This was after I had served the church with all my heart since the age of 16. I lost the work that I loved because I refused to view Ellen White in the same way that the leaders of the Adventist church did. (Ironically, what nerved me in my rebellion against my overseers at Glacier View was wisdom found in the book *Counsels to Writers and Editors*.²)

The decades since my expulsion have only increased my belief that Ellen White should be esteemed a good pastor, but not as an infallible exegete of Scripture.

When I first discovered the writings of Ellen White, I was a fiction addict who went to the theater three times every Saturday. Because of Ellen White, I gave up fiction and theatergoing. I also changed my physical habits; otherwise, I might have been dead decades ago due to my intensity. Had I not changed my

habits, I could never have attended a Christian college and three universities with any success.

I have been reading widely for several hours a day for 77 years. The best books that I have read have been by writers who read widely and borrowed freely—as far back as Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon. Ellen White quoted from others, ideas that she referred to as “scattered gems of truth” that needed to be gathered up. I think she did exactly that.

I have been characterized as one who loves to preach the New Testament gospel of justification by faith. I have taught this theme to trainee ministers and laypeople for decades, and I own many precious volumes on the subject written by prestigious leaders of the Christian church. Yet there is nothing in all those books that I cherish more than what is found in *Selected Messages, Book 1*, pages 350-400 (especially pages 366-367—I urge you to read them). Elsewhere she admonished that in our preaching, “One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness,”³ the “sweetest melodies that come from God through human lips.”⁴

Ellen White claimed to have had about 2,000 visions. Not one of them concerned the 1844 investigative judgment. All of Ellen White’s references to prophetic matters in *The Great Controversy*

draw from the writings of others. As for the investigative judgment, Uriah Smith and J. N. Andrews were Ellen White's chief sources. Smith wrote that the investigative judgment began in 1844 and would be brief. He was wrong on both counts, but Ellen White, in her early years at least, believed both.

Yet in *The Desire of Ages*, we find she applied the day of atonement not to 1844, but to Calvary. She referred specifically to the day of atonement when she wrote: "Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all."⁵

Repeatedly, Ellen White has told us to search the Scriptures for more light. She has never said that that light is to be found in her books. However, I had a very interesting experience at Manchester University, where my tutor was the eminent Professor F. F. Bruce. In my dissertation, "The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology," I reviewed all of the Scriptural passages dealing with antichrist and the last days.

The most difficult passage was 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, in particular verse 7 regarding the restrainer (*the one who hinders*, from the Greek κατέχω). I remember running in Manchester's Deer Park every day, praying about the difficulties in this passage, regarding which no unanimity can be found among Bible commentators. It was indeed a *crux interpretum*. As I ran, fragments of Ellen White's writings came into my thoughts. Many years earlier I had disagreed vigorously with my friend Robert

Brinsmead regarding the gospel, the person of Christ, and the last days. To that end I had ransacked White, whose writings Bob at that time accepted as equivalent to the Bible.

In my dissertation I did not quote Ellen White, but I used what I felt were insightful ideas from her regarding the restrainer to come. When F. F. Bruce read it, he said: "If you are asked in the orals why you should be granted a Ph.D., point to this section." I had disagreed with him and with every other commentator he had ever read, but my germinal thrust came from Ellen White. Her insights, particularly when talking about the manner in which the Holy Spirit will restrain the last workings of the antichrist until the gospel is proclaimed, certainly did not come from James White or any other Adventist. Indeed, I have not been able to find any source for her views.

So, how do I regard Ellen White today? With gratitude and respect, but not with obeisance. 🙏

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1909), p. 222.

² "Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth as much as we do. Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing?" White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1946), pp. 44.

³ White, "Be Zealous and Repent," *Review and Herald Extra*, Dec. 23, 1890, paragraph 19.

⁴ White, "Address to the Church," *Review and Herald*, April 4, 1893.

⁵ White, *The Desire of Ages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1898), p. 757.

The weather is cold in New England now. And as I walk across a nearly frozen open space on my way to pick up my mail, I think of a young girl I have been reading about and turn to see if anyone is following me, as someone did this child nearly 180 years ago. Almost anyone who has been reared in the Adventist faith knows what looking over one's shoulder means, how the question of who is following us follows us. Are my earrings too dangly? Makeup too heavy? Clothes too attention-getting? Could any of the brethren at the academy or conference office close by have a notion of what I am thinking, as they seemed to when I was a kid of 9 or 10?

By Winona Winkler Wendth

A GREAT CRADLE

I am still surprised by the truth that this response has its origins in the story of a little girl who was stalked and attacked by an acquaintance. A child who suffered a mind-changing injury—a child whose life was inalterably changed by that injury and the men who explained and contained it and who maintained the meaning of its consequences.

Sometime during the autumn of 1836, a 9-year-old girl

crossing an open space in Portland, Maine, turned and met face-on with a rock. We don't know what day or month this was, only that she, along with a friend and sister, were returning home from school. According to the child's narrative published forty-some-odd years later, the rock had been thrown in anger by an older schoolmate who was three or four years her senior. The story has been retold a number of times, but because we have no records about when or where, exactly, this happened, or who the angry pubescent was, no external information grounds the story. We do have a number of other accounts, the first by the grown child's husband, and several others by a succession of men who have harbored and controlled the woman's letters and manuscripts.

We are told this: Ellen White lost consciousness at the time of the concussion, awoke a while later at a merchant's at the edge of the park or common, and refused transportation to her house, politely protesting in fear of bleeding in his carriage; her sister and, possibly, her friend, helped her home, at which time she collapsed again. The child lay unconscious for three weeks, or, possibly, more or less unconscious for three weeks. Diary entries or letters written by her mother or older sisters or anyone else who was at or near this event have not been found; at least, they have not been shared. According to White, her father lost hope that his daughter would ever be normal, and her family offered to help the child prepare for death; the 9-year-old refused. Her father built "A great cradle... for me," she writes, in which she lay for weeks, reduced "to a skeleton."


We know this: That winter was an unusually cold one in Maine, although not so cold as the one before—flowering fruit trees blossomed weeks late and lost many of the blossoms that had come, proving a sketchy spring and summer. We know that White lived in the "new," less established part of town, that her father made and sold hats for his in-laws, that no park or open space in that part of town was expansive. We know that brain trauma of this sort is often a precursor to various types of epilepsy.

We can guess this: The child was traumatically injured some time in the autumn—White mentions the *aurora borealis* she witnessed shortly after she started recovery, which she found nearly spiritual and which we know was an exuberant display in January of 1837. We can assume that snow had not fallen, or whoever it was who chased and threw a rock at the child might not have been able to move so fast or find a projectile suitable to cause havoc. We can assume that the 9-year-old did not say, "No, sir, I don't want to sully your carriage with all this blood," but probably said something like "No, no, I want to go home now." We can surmise that White may well have suffered with ecstatic epilepsy, a condition shared by some writers, such as

Dostoevsky, who had vivid dreams and visions, as well as bouts of manic writing that presented like frequent events in White's life—the episodes that are widely written about by the men in her life and the men after, who have been the trustees of the manuscripts and letters and who have interpreted and mediated these experiences, as well as White's own understandings of them, since 1915, if not 1880.

White did not remember the accident, she wrote, and must have made her own assumptions about what had happened through exchanges after the event, perhaps a very long time after the event. Her weak memory was common knowledge, but the human drive to remember and communicate in narrative form no doubt shaped her recollections and the personal identity she derived from them. The story of the 9-year-old child with a perspicacious reading of what had happened to her leaves out as much as it includes, because it didn't seem necessary to the project pursued by the men surrounding her and leading the church. This is true for a good share of what we know about the woman, at age 9 or 89.

I have little cause to question the central event. But what is left out of stories like this can be as telling as what is reported, especially secondhand or thirdhand. In his "me-too" biography of White's experience, her husband begins his book with a parallel story of his own unexpected survivor narrative—illness, difficulty learning, a future others held out as unlikely—and then recounts his wife's story as though it is a validation of his. This is true of many of the men who have counseled, contained, interpreted, and edited the writings of an adult 9-year-old who was looking for meaning and wisdom through a devastating event. The corpus of writings they have curated show an opinioned but degendered, ultimately disempowered woman whose gifts of necklaces to her female staff were airbrushed out of photographs. One wonders if she, too began to look over her shoulder to see who was watching, who was reinterpreting, editing, revising, re-collecting, reforming her sense of herself and her mission, eliding or occluding the mistakes and inaccuracies that are inevitable in the enthusiastic writings of a narrowly educated but well-intended—and possibly open-minded—woman who suffered from neurological misfirings. Would she recognize fellow-sufferer Dostoevsky's observation about Jesus in *The Grand Inquisitor* that no matter her original role in the church, she is no longer "mission-critical" to its success?

One wonders if she had the briefest recollection of lying in a "great cradle," kept apart from the people she believed in, protected for her own good, and whether or not she would recognize the ongoing paternalist project that is keeping her there, still. 

The Jesus Christ Estate: A Speculative Parable

by Carey Constantine (a pseudonym)

Time: AD 31, about 2 months after Jesus' resurrection

Place: Jerusalem

The Apostle John is sitting at a table, writing slowly and deliberately with a quill pen. James and Peter enter. James sits down across from his brother, while Peter leans on the sill of a window.

James: Dear brother, you will wear yourself out with this scribbling! You have been at it all day and night. Already you have used all of the parchment I bought you, as well as the full cruet of ink!

John: I feel I must, James. After what happened to us last week at the Pentecost celebration, I feel compelled to share the stories and teachings of Jesus. I fear, however, that as strongly as the events of our several years with him have been burned upon my mind, I may forget a detail or two. And since I can write a little—which not all of our brothers can do—I must record them as they come to mind.

James: Then I would not discourage you. I feel much the same, though I can write even less than you. Just this morning, after I addressed a crowd in the synagogue, a very young new believer, a fellow named Mark, approached me. He is a trained scribe, and he asked if he could take dictation of my stories, to share them with others.

Peter: Just as experiencing these events so deeply affected us, even the telling of them has power. It's the most important thing that ever happened, and of all the people who ever lived on this Earth, it is we simple fishermen who got to walk and work beside the Messiah.

James: Exactly. And that's why I readily consented to Mark's request.

Peter (pauses): Are you sure you ought to have?

James: Did not Jesus himself say that his words were life? If young Mark can help me tell more people by writing my stories down and sending them out, then more will accept Jesus before he returns.

Peter: Of course—that was always Jesus' goal. I only worry about one thing.

John (laying down his pen, rubbing his eyes and reaching for a cup of water): What's that, Peter?

Peter: Jesus said some things that are very hard to understand and that could be very confusing, if not properly explained.

John (chuckles): Like that line about not bringing peace but a sword, and turning parents and children against one another? I've never really understood what he meant by that, but he said it, so I've accepted it as truth.

Peter: It must be. But you don't tell it everywhere, do you? When we speak about Jesus, we give appropriate messages: simple for the simple. We don't feed people meat when they need milk. If you set it all down in writing for just anyone to read, who knows what people will do with Jesus' words?

James: But Peter, Jesus told us to tell his story throughout the world!

Peter: Brothers, understand that I am not talking about restricting Jesus' central message. Not at all. But can you see how teachings like "the sin that can't be forgiven" could be twisted by our enemies into something that pushes people away? *I'm* not sure what he meant by that, and I was with him when he said it!

John: I admit there are a few things I wish Jesus *hadn't* said. They are so hard to understand and raise so many questions that it is hardly worthwhile to tell them.

Peter: Jesus wants us to maximize the potential of his message. When we teach about grace, about being saved through faith in Jesus' sacrifice, about the Lord's Supper, about kindness and goodness—the basic Christian teachings—people flock to him. But if someone should hear one of the troublesome parables, like that one about the unjust steward, couldn't they wrest them to their own destruction?

James: Your words awaken a fear *I've* had. We were young and immature back then, and we don't always look very good in those stories. Do you think Jesus would want to have passed down in history what happened to you, Peter, the night of his trial, before the rooster crowed the final time?

Peter (*with a despairing gesture*): Oh, please don't remind me. It is my great shame. How could I possibly have authority as an evangelist if it became widely known that I blasphemed to save myself from being crucified with my Lord? People wouldn't listen to me. I am only comforted that Jesus meant it as a *personal* lesson to me, not one that should be made public.

John: Jesus said he'd return as soon as enough people have heard about him. The written word could extend the reach of our evangelistic efforts.

Peter: Perhaps we should form a group—just us disciples—and together, as a committee, we would make sure that whatever is written about Jesus conforms to the standards of his message as *we* understood it.

James (*excitedly*): We would create a single approved written gospel, one that has all of the easy stories and teachings but leaves out the more difficult ones!

John: But what of those other truths? Jesus wouldn't have said them if he hadn't wanted people to hear them.

Peter: I think that is easily solved. When we meet with the other disciples, we'll assemble all of the teachings, stories, and parables we found difficult to understand. We'll vote to release them one by one, when we all agree the church members are ready to hear them. We won't release anything that might embarrass people who are still alive—such as ourselves. When we do release a teaching or story, we can give an explanation, so that it doesn't become a point of controversy.

John returns to his writing.

John: Well, I'm out of both ink and parchment. Brother James, I hope you can get me more.

James: I haven't a mite left. I don't even know where we'll find our evening meal. I certainly have no more for writing materials.

Peter (*ponders*): There might be a solution to that, too. Once we do create an official version of Jesus' teachings, we'll set copyists to make attractive scrolls, dress them up with dark red covers, and sell them. The profits can finance our ministry.

John: I begin to see your point.

Peter: However, if you let that young scribe write down your sermons about Jesus, and then copy and send them out as he wishes—well, we have no idea what mistakes he'll make or what difficult teachings he'll reveal that ought to be kept among us for now. And besides, we'd make no money for parchment, ink—and food.

James (*thoughtfully*): After all, Jesus left no family, no heirs. He left nothing of value—except his life story. There is no one to carry on his work other than us, and no one to make sure it is done well. It only makes sense that we take responsibility for his teachings.

John: What shall we call this group that edits the writings of Jesus and approves their release?

Peter: How about the "Jesus Christ Estate"?

Ellen White on Ellen White

What Ellen G. White means to the Seventh-day Adventist church has been a point of contention from the beginning of the movement. As recently as this past summer, we were still refining her role in the church's life: The delegates at the San Antonio General Conference Session changed the description of her writings in Fundamental Belief 18 from "a continuing and authoritative source of truth" to writings that "speak with prophetic authority." Supporters argued that the new wording more accurately shows Ellen White's writings as ancillary to Scripture rather than equal to it—though it's interesting that this readjustment of her authority occurred in a session dominated by questions of authority and gender, women in ministry, and male headship.

Among the reasons why Ellen White's role in the church has been difficult for us to understand is her own conflicting statements on the subject. What follows are some of her thoughts about her authority and how it relates to that of Scripture. I've tried to group them into those that exalt the Bible and those that suggest a stronger authority for her. (Thanks to Monte Sahlin, Des Ford, and Carmen Seibold for helping me to assemble these.)

—Loren Seibold, Editor

Quotes That Downplay Her Authority

"To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. ... my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger..."

—"No Boastful Claims," *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1906, cited in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 1958, p. 34

"Our position and faith is in the Bible. And never do we want any soul to bring in the *Testimonies* ahead of the Bible."

—Manuscript 7, 1894, cited in *Evangelism*, 1946, p. 256

"Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."

—*The Colporteur Evangelist*, 1902, p. 37, cited in *Evangelism*, 1946, p. 257

"The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front. 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."

—Letter 12, 1890, cited in *Evangelism*, 1946, p. 256

"In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible."

—Letter 10, June 9, 1895

"I have had no claims to make, only that I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger."

—*Selected Messages*, Book 1, 1958, p. 32

It has been presented to me that, so far as possible, I am to impart instruction in the language of the Scriptures; for there are those whose spiritual discernment is confused, and when their errors are reproved, they will misinterpret and misapply what I might write, and thus make of none-effect the words of warning that the Lord sends. He desires that the messages He sends shall be recognized as the words of eternal truth.” —Letter 280, 1906, p. 4 (To “My Brethren and Sisters in Denver and Boulder,” August 27, 1906); cited in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 5, 1990, p. 151

“The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 1871, 1889, p. 665

“My brother, you have studied my writings diligently, and you have never found that I have made any such claims [that every word was as inspired as the Ten Commandments]. Neither will you find that the pioneers in our cause have made such claims.”
—Letter 206, June 14, 1906, cited in *Review and Herald*, Aug. 30, 1906

“At that time [after the 1844 disappointment] one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.”
—*Selected Messages*, Book 3, 1980, p. 31

Quotes That Reinforce Her Authority

“My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.”
—Letter 244, 1906 (To “The Elders of the Battle Creek Church,” July 17, 1906)

“In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There never was a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, 1881, p. 147

“Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You thereby insulted the Spirit of God.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 1889, p. 64

“My writings are kept on file..., and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people.”
—*Selected Messages*, Book 1, 1958, p. 55

“I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions—the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm—the feeble instrument

that God spoke through—but against the Holy Ghost. I saw [that] it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God.”
—*Selected Messages*, Book 1, 1958, p. 40

“My work for the past thirty years bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The *Testimonies* are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil. In arraying yourself against the servants of God you are doing a work either for God or for the devil.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, 1881, p. 229

“In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 1889, p. 67

“Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent, and arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?”
—*Selected Messages*, Book 1, 1958, p. 27



How Long, Oh Lord?

By Alden Thompson

It's been 171 years since 1844 and 100 years since Ellen White's death. Is it safe to talk about why Jesus hasn't come yet?

Of course it's not safe. But it's time, or so it seems to me. How to go about it, however, is problematic. Our prophet died 100 years ago. She spelled out an end-time plan in *The Great Controversy*. It still hasn't happened, and sometimes we wonder whether or not it will. Where to from here?¹

Matthew chapters 24 and 25 answer our questions about the delay: There is no delay; we are to be always ready. But making peace with that simple answer will not be easy. In the words of Ellen White: "Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word."² Martin Luther was more colorful: "Living, nay dying and being damned make a theologian—not understanding, reading, or speculation."³ Thomas Hopko, dean of an orthodox seminary, describes again the anguish: "Theology is not simply studied, say the saints, it is suffered. It is not only a matter of ink, but of blood. It requires prayer and repentance. It is an ascetic as well as an intellectual activity."⁴ Luther and Hopko may have been speaking of professional theologians, but in a sense every believer is a theologian, for we all speak about God. Thus no one escapes the tears when we ask why Jesus hasn't returned.

Let's begin with an Uncle Arthur⁵ story to illustrate this question:

A farmer looking for a hired hand was drawn to an honest-looking young man. But to the question, "What do you know about farming?" all the lad would say was, "I can sleep on windy nights." Puzzled, the farmer hired him anyway and was pleased with his work—until one night when the farmer woke up with a start. Strong winds were lashing the house.

With visions of animals, hay, and barns all at risk, he bounded out of bed and went to rouse his hired hand.

Sound asleep. The farmer couldn't rouse him at all. Angrily he stomped out to repair the damage. But to his amazement, he found everything buttoned down tight. Animals, hay, and barns were all safe. Finally the truth struck home: "I can sleep on windy nights."

Neither in Adventism nor in the larger world does that attitude of constant preparedness—the message of Matthew 24-25—come easily. The seemingly long delay has pushed Adventists in divergent directions.

In the wider Christian world, secular preterists and devout futurists represent the extremes. During the Reformation, when all Protestants knew who the beast was, Roman Catholics used preterism and futurism to deflect Protestant attacks. In our modern era, these extremes are even more extreme. Preterism is now a rigorously anti-supernaturalist movement that denies any real Second Coming at all, while futurism is a Fundamentalist movement with specific predictions about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem on the site of the Moslem mosque, in addition to projections of childbirth, death, and animal sacrifice during an earthly millennium.

By contrast, Adventists have been historicists, who, like the Reformers, plot every event on a single line of history. The four-nation sequence of Daniel 2 and 7 points the way. Historicism gave us the Great Disappointment. But for those strict historicists who pinpoint the second advent to a specific date, the danger is that as the gap between the date and the expected event increases, the delay can become ever more problematic.

Multiple Applications of Prophecies

As an alternative to preterism, futurism, and historicism, I am suggesting "applied historicism,"⁶ an approach that recognizes multiple applications of prophecies. Traditional historicist labels of events

and participants can remain the same but provide illustrations to use wherever the shoe fits. Thus the beasts of Daniel and Revelation become types of every beastly dictator on Earth. Even Adventists can see shadows of the beast in the mirror!

Scripture illustrates how multiple applications work for eschatology. In the book of Joel, for example, celestial signs herald the Day of the Lord: “the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine” (Joel 2:10-11, NIV). These same signs mark the Day of the Lord in other prophetic books, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos. These signs always point to an imminent *local* day—which then points forward to a final day of judgment and restoration.⁷

In Joel, the dark day is a grasshopper plague in the prophet’s own lifetime. In Acts 2:16-21, Peter reapplies Joel’s dark day to events connected with the crucifixion and Pentecost. In the 19th century, Adventist historicists linked Joel’s prophecy with the Dark Day of May 19, 1780—note the capitalization. For Adventist historicists, May 19, 1780, was *the* Dark Day that eclipsed all dark days! But Revelation 6:12-16 clearly refers to another one: the ultimate dark day when Jesus comes.

That seems clear, I should say, unless one is too closely wedded to traditional historicism. Uriah Smith expounds at length on the signs of verses 12 and 13, giving dates: Lisbon earthquake, Nov. 1, 1755; the darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780; and the falling of the stars, Nov. 13, 1833.⁸ Verse 14 immediately follows with a description of Jesus’ return: “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (KJV). But instead of linking the signs with the Second Advent, Smith speaks of a gap: “We stand between the 13th and 14th verses of this chapter,”⁹ and he waxes eloquent on the Advent hope.

For us, the obvious reading of the text is to see all of

the signs applying to the time of the Second Coming. But Smith lived too close to the traditional historicist events to see them as accompanying the Second Coming.

In short, we can see possibilities that Uriah Smith could not. Adventists call this “present truth,” a phrase Ellen White used in the context of the 1888 turmoil: “That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God’s message for this time.”¹⁰ A turnaround in just 20 years! Astonishing! In other words, we can say “amen” to Uriah Smith, but we don’t have to stop with his interpretation.

Another illustration of multiple applications is the sanctuary. The vision of Daniel 8 clearly pointed Daniel to the sanctuary destroyed by Babylon in 587/586 BCE, the only sanctuary Daniel knew. When Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in 168/167 BCE by offering a pig on the altar of burnt offering (among other atrocities), the Jewish people applied the language of Daniel to this new enemy. But a third application then appears in Matthew 24:15, where Jesus spoke of a future abomination involving the temple, a reference interpreters unanimously apply to the Roman destruction in 70 CE.

All of this shows that, in this passage, a rigid preterism with its exclusive focus on Antiochus cannot be fair to all of the biblical evidence. Antiochus was indeed a desecrating force, but not the only one. Babylon destroyed the sanctuary, Antiochus polluted it, and Rome destroyed it again. Then what? Twice in Daniel 8, the angelic messenger said that the vision concerned “the time of the end” (vs. 17, 19). But after 70 CE, the sanctuary is gone, leaving us with just two choices: (1) Rebuild the temple on the site of the Moslem mosque with our futurist friends; or (2) Turn our attention to the heavenly sanctuary and explore all that it means to us in terms of Christ’s ministry on our behalf.

Given those options, I'll take the heavenly sanctuary any day. And a heavenly sanctuary is truly universal, because it is no longer bound to one location on Earth. That offers Adventists exciting opportunities for further study.

How Jesus Answered End-Time Questions

So we return to the question: Why hasn't Jesus come? Matthew 24-25 is crucial here. My own introduction to these chapters came when I was a freshman at Walla Walla College in 1961-62, studying Matthew under Elder J. Paul Grove. With his encouragement, the truth dawned on me one day: we can't simply add up the signs—as Adventists have traditionally done—to show that the coming is near. We need to look more closely to see how these chapters address end-time questions.

Every story in Matthew 24-25 tells us that we cannot simply accumulate famines, earthquakes, and wars to show that the coming is near. This passage repeatedly demonstrates that we don't know when Christ will return, and we must always be ready.

In Matthew 24,¹¹ after Jesus referred to the destruction of the temple, the disciples eagerly asked: "When will this happen? What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the world?" (vs. 3). Jesus gave a long list of signs, declaring, "So when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time has almost come" (vs. 33).

But he immediately moved from signs to surprises: "No one knows the day or hour. The angels in heaven don't know, and the Son himself doesn't know. Only

the Father knows" (vs. 36). In the days of Noah, the flood caught everyone by surprise. And a thief always comes when you don't expect it. "So be on your guard!" declared Jesus. "You don't know when your Lord will come" (vs. 42).

Three illustrations follow, all with the same moral. Do you know when the thief is coming? No. So be ready! A man leaving on a trip puts his servants in charge. Do they know when he is returning? No. So be ready! The wedding party waits for the bridegroom, who is delayed—but finally arrives. The moral: "Always be ready! You don't know the day or the time when all this will happen" (25:13).

Then Jesus told another story, this time describing what God's people should be doing while they wait. A master put his servants in charge of his business then left on a trip. "After a long time" (vs. 19, NIV) he returned and settled accounts, richly rewarding two servants who kept on working but firmly judging a third who had done nothing. The moral: work while you wait. Then, as Uncle Arthur might tell us, we can also sleep on windy nights.

Finally, in the judgment story of the sheep and the goats, Jesus taught that those who serve the needy serve their master. Judgment fell on those who did nothing.

Every story in these two chapters tells us that we cannot simply accumulate famines, earthquakes, and wars to show that the coming is near. This passage repeatedly demonstrates that we don't know when Christ will return, and we must always be ready.

We can find reinforcement for Jesus' point in Matthew 24-25, that his coming will be a surprise, in two additional New Testament passages. Just before Jesus' ascension, the disciples asked him if the time had come. "You don't need to know," said Jesus (Acts 1:7, CEV). Paul is equally blunt with the Thessalonians: "I don't need to write you about the time or date when all this will happen. You surely know that the Lord's return will be as a thief coming at night" (1 Thess. 5:1-2, CEV).

The New Testament message is clear: Everyone will be surprised. The only question is whether it will be a happy surprise or a painful one. C. S. Lewis summarized the New Testament teaching as follows: "We must never speak to simple, excitable people

about ‘the Day’ without emphasizing again and again the utter impossibility of prediction. We must try to show them that that impossibility is an essential part of the doctrine. If you do not believe our Lord’s words, why do you believe in his return at all? And if you do believe them must you not put away from you, utterly and forever, any hope of dating that return? His teaching on the subject quite clearly consisted of three propositions. (1) That he will certainly return. (2) That we cannot possibly find out when. (3) And that therefore we must always be ready for him.”¹²

A Homework Assignment

Let me recommend to you some homework on two important issues: multiple applications and conditionality. The first is a crucial but mostly overlooked article titled “The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy,” from the fourth volume of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, pp. 25-38. The second is the full context of Ellen White’s tantalizing statement in connection with the delay that “the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional” in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, pp. 59-73. Both selections are potentially explosive. Read them carefully and prayerfully.

Finally, I want to share an encouraging word with those who feel guilty for questioning Adventist certainties. Take heart, for when we ask our questions, we stand with noble witnesses: Abraham, Moses, Job, and Habakkuk. Most of all, we stand with the anguished martyrs crying out from under the altar in Revelation 6:10: “How long, O Lord?” They’re asking about the delay.

You are also in the company of Ellen White. There is a striking contrast between the frightened young Ellen White who could not ask questions and the mature Ellen White who could. As a young person, she had a horrified reaction to her mother’s view that hell might not be eternal after all. “‘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.’”¹³ Later in her life, she wrote in *The Great Controversy*: “The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept

away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.”¹⁴ She no longer saw hell as an incentive for belief—in fact, quite the opposite. “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.”¹⁵

If Ellen White could learn to ask questions and confront long-standing tradition, so can we. She can help us, and we can help each other to work days and sleep nights—even on windy nights. Then we will hear those wonderful words: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father” (Matt. 25:34, NIV).

¹ This piece is the end result of long negotiations with Loren Seibold, the new *Adventist Today* editor. My original version was over 9,000 words, too long for the magazine! If you’d like to read the complete paper, email me at alden@wallawalla.edu and I’ll send you a PDF version.

² Ellen G. White, Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886), published in *Selected Messages*, Book 1 (1958), p. 20.

³ This frequently cited quote is from a 1520 lecture on Psalm 5:11, reprinted in the complete edition of Luther’s works, *Weimarer Ausgabe*, Vol. 5, p. 163, lines 29-30 (see <http://magdalenesegg.blogspot.com/2011/10/living-dying-and-being-damned.html>).

⁴ Thomas Hopko, upon installation as dean of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary, cited in the *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*, Jan. 3, 1993.

⁵ Uncle Arthur is Arthur S. Maxwell, a prolific writer for children, whose *Uncle Arthur’s Bedtime Stories* were once widely known among English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist children. In addition, he fathered four of the Seventh-day Adventist church’s best theologians and writers. This story is titled “Why Victor Slept So Well,” from *Uncle Arthur’s Bedtime Stories*, Seventeenth Series (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1941), pp. 25-27.

⁶ See Alden Thompson, *Beyond Common Ground: Why Liberals and Conservatives Need Each Other* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2009), pp. 194-220.

⁷ Examples include Isa. 13:10, applied to Babylon; Isa. 24:23, applied to the earth; Jer. 15:9, applied to Jerusalem; Eze. 32:7, applied to Egypt; Amos 8:9-10, applied to Israel.

⁸ Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, revised (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1944), pp. 437-448.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 449.

¹⁰ White, Manuscript 8a-1888 (Oct. 21, 1888), published in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), p. 133.

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, citations are from the Contemporary English Version (CEV).

¹² C. S. Lewis, “The World’s Last Night” in *The World’s Last Night and Other Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1952-1987), p. 107.

¹³ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1868), p. 39.

¹⁴ White, *The Great Controversy* (1888, 1911), p. 674.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 525.

Editorial *continued from page 3*

Pastor Seibold joins fully in these goals and commitments. He brings new creativity, ideas, skill, and leadership, and I am delighted to work with him. There is about a decade of difference between my age and his, and another couple of decades between his age and that of our capable online managing editor, Jeff Boyd. *Adventist Today* is clearly building for the future.

Our board is developing a detailed plan for 2016 through 2020. If you are a donor or a subscriber, you will soon see a copy of this plan. The survey we just completed is the first of two or three each year that we will conduct in order to get input from the people we serve and to hear the opinions of Adventists on current issues.

We need your prayers! We need your support. Renew your subscription. Consider joining the Freedom Fund or


one of the other donor groups listed in the box on page 2. Write to Loren at atoday@atoday.org (by email) or send a letter to Box 1135, Sandy, Oregon 97055. Share your ideas and support!

Monte Sahlin is the executive director of the Adventist Today Foundation, the nonprofit organization that publishes this magazine and related digital and social media, as well as books and DVDs.

Hemmings *continued from page 13*

given,²¹ the undertones of a conflict seem likely. Her name appears (along with that of Lulu Wightman) among the list of ordained ministers in the 1908 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. It would seem, then, that the many statements she made regarding the value of the work of women, and their compensation, were not

patronizing statements, as many use them today. Rather, they seem to have offered resistance to a systematic marginalization of female ministers, for whom she could not openly fight without being identified with the women's movement and thus lose her own credibility as the prophet of the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

Ellen White wasn't indifferent toward the question of women's ordination. She walked the tightrope of affirming the value of women in ministry without identifying with the culturally maligned women's movement. If the denomination is willing to take another look at this aspect of its history, we may hear the voice of the prophet saying something definite and positive on the question of women's ordination. 

¹ See Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Women in the Ordained Ministry*, eds, Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAMPress, 1995), p. 28ff.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

PS Form 3526 Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (For Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP - FORM 3526

1. Complete Name/Publisher Title
ADVENTIST TODAY FOUNDATION

2. Issue Frequency
Quarterly

3. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer)
PO BOX 1135
SANDY, OR 97055-0135

4. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher
PO BOX 1135
SANDY, OR 97055-0135

5. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)
Publisher: MONTA SAHLIN
Editor: LOREN SEIBOLD
Managing Editor: JEFF BOYD

6. Statement of Ownership (Form 3526)

7. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Date: 01/14/2016

PS Form 1526 Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (For Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP - FORM 3526

13. Complete Name/Publisher Title
ADVENTIST TODAY FOUNDATION

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/01/2015

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		16. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below (mm/dd/yyyy)	
		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (net press run)		2,412	1,500
b. Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b(1) through 15b(4))		834	794
c. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15b(5) through 15b(8))		0	0
d. Total Distribution (Sum of 15b(1) through 15b(8))		834	794
e. Copies not Distributed		1,578	706
f. Total Copies of 15b(1) and 15b(2)		834	794
g. Percent Paid (15b(2) divided by 15b(1) times 100)		100.00%	100.00%
h. If total circulation includes electronic copies, report that circulation on each below			
i. Paid Electronic Copies		0	0
j. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15b(2) + Paid Electronic Copies)		0	0
k. Total Free Distribution (Line 15b(3) + Paid Electronic Copies)		0	0
l. Percent Paid (both Print & Electronic Copies)		0.00%	0.00%

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required, and be printed on the 01/01/2016 issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Date: 01/14/2016

Reason for Amendment

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

Previous Step: Page 1
Page 2
Next Step: Check Ownership

View Previous Version: 01/06/2016 03:48:10 PM - Final Amendment

² Ellen White's son Willie White, who was a delegate at the session, reported that delegates had separated into competing progressive and conservative camps and that there were "likely to be lively times" before the session was over. See W.C. White to Mary White, 2 December, 1881, General Conference Archives (Silver Spring, MD).

³ See George R. Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil: The Development of Adventist Church Structure* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), pp. 101-102.

⁴ Richard W. Schwartz, "The Perils of Growth: 1886-1905," in *Adventism in America: A History*, ed. Gary Land (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 99-138.

⁵ Shortly after the 1891 General Conference Session, Ellen White was involved in a near-fatal carriage accident. Arthur L. White in his biography of Ellen White wrote: "George B. Starr and his wife, engaged in evangelism in that area, witnessed it at close range and felt it was an attempt on the part of the enemy to bring injury to Ellen White or to destroy her and those with her." He quotes Ellen White as saying concerning the accident that "upon examining the wheel [we] found that the spokes were too small for the holes in the hub, and wooden wedges had been driven in to make the spokes fit, then painted all over. It was a complete fraud. I am sorry that even all our brethren cannot be trusted to deal honorably, without pretense or fraud." See Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years: 1876-1891*, Vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981), pp. 490-491.

⁶ Ellen White to Uriah Smith, 1890, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 471.

⁷ See Richard W. Schwartz, "The Perils of Growth: 1886-1905," *Adventism in America: A History*, edited by Gary Land (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), pp. 99-138.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 105.

⁹ See Ellen G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, 23 August, 1883, General Conference Archives (Silver Spring, MD).

¹⁰ Ellen G. White to Mary White, Nov. 4, 1888, quoted in Knight, p. 73.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² White, Manuscript 33, 1891, in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 17 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), p. 166.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁴ Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 23. Also, the 1881 General Conference addressed these two issues associated with spiritualism: qualification for ministry, and women in ministry (see <http://tinyurl.com/AToday1>).

¹⁵ Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 155.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 161-163.

¹⁸ See Braude, p. 36.

¹⁹ Donald Dayton argues that the American

revivalism of Charles Finney gave rise to women speaking in the public meetings, eventually leading to full ordination for women. See Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1976), p. 88.

²⁰ Seventh-day Adventism grew out of the Revivalist Movement that saw women taking to the pulpits, and several of them leading denominations. At a time when the focus of Seventh-day Adventism was on evangelistic preaching, many women took on the role of evangelists and obtained ministerial licenses. However, once the church joined the culture war against the women's movement, this phenomenon of women taking an active public role in the denomination became a controversial issue.

²¹ William Fagel, an assistant secretary of the Ellen White Estate in the 1980s and a strident opponent of women's ordination, speculates that this crossing out did not represent a change in status but, rather, "highlights the awkwardness of giving credentials to a prophet." According to him, since no credential for the category of prophet exists, the church gave her the highest credential it had. See William Fagel, "Ellen White and the Role of Women in the Church," unpublished manuscript, Ellen G. White Estate, p. 11. Also, George R. Knight simply states that although the denomination never formally ordained Ellen White, "it listed her as an ordained minister," so that she could receive a full ministerial salary. See Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999), p. 105.

Receive the latest AT Update FREE Each Weekend

Each Friday the *Adventist Today* editorial team publishes a FREE listing of all the news stories and commentary (usually 10-15 articles) released during the week. It's a free service; it comes once a week at the same time (9 a.m. in the North American Pacific Northwest; noon in the East); and is ABSOLUTELY FREE.

Currently more than 3,000 recipients subscribe to the free service, and many comment that AT UPDATE is a welcome information source for the weekend, delving deep under the surface of many topics.

It's easy to order: Just email atoday@atoday.org and write: "Please add this email address to your list of AT UPDATE subscribers. I understand that this is a free service of *Adventist Today* and that I can cancel at any time without obligation." Phone 503-826-8600.

No purchase necessary to receive AT UPDATE at your email address of choice.

AT UPDATE:
Accurate....Timely....Incisive



Much to Applaud

As a believer in the grand old Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, I found much to applaud in Alden Thompson's bold, thoughtful "Now Is the Time." Thank you for that column and the other stimulating pieces in the Fall 2015 issue.

MYRON WEHTJE
South Lancaster, Massachusetts

Not All in Africa Oppose Women's Ordination

I frequently read articles that you present on various subjects. I am, however, sad to note that you feel that Africa is opposed to women's ordination. That is not true. I am living in _____, and I too was disappointed at the vote against women's ordination. I know of several delegates from my country and other countries in Africa who passionately support women's ordination. I am not in a position to go public in my support of women's ordination, because I feel that I may cause unnecessary conflict, but I just wanted you to know that I am equally disappointed. I will continue to preach the gospel.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The writer is a district pastor in central Africa. His name and location are being withheld for his protection.*

Contributors



DESMOND FORD, retired Adventist theologian with doctorates from Michigan State University and the University of

Manchester (UK), writes from Shelly Beach, Caloundra, in Queensland, Australia.



OLIVE HEMMINGS is professor of religion and ethics at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland.



JENNIFFER OGDEN is the children and family pastor at Walla Walla University Church in Washington state.



LOREN SEIBOLD is a pastor in Ohio and the executive editor of *Adventist Today*.



ALDEN THOMPSON is professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla University.



GILBERT M. VALENTINE chairs the Department of Leadership and Administration at La Sierra University and

has written extensively in the area of leadership and Seventh-day Adventist history. He is the author of *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation* (2005), *The Struggle for the Prophetic Heritage* (2006), and *The Prophet and the Presidents* (2011).



WINONA WINKLER WENDTH is a writer and adjunct professor in the humanities at Quinsigamond Community College.

She is a graduate of Atlantic Union College and holds an MFA in literature and writing from the Bennington Writing Seminars.



ZANE YI, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, where he teaches courses in philosophy and theology.

EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the editorial board. One of the purposes of this magazine is to encourage dialogue between those of differing viewpoints within the Adventist Church. Thus, we will publish articles ranging throughout the conservative-liberal continuum.



Adventist Man

A SATIRICAL LOOK AT ADVENTIST LIFE

The LOAF Project

I thrilled with a shock of misplaced ecstasy when I first heard of the LOAF Project. "Finally," I said to myself, "the potluck-attending populace is rising up against those dreary gray slabs of baked lentils, which have caused so much childhood trauma."

But I was wrong. LOAF stands for "Little Old Adventist Face," an example of which you can see depicted in Fig. 1.¹



Fig. 1.

You can still spot the occasional LOAF in large metropolitan congregations, but the greatest number inhabit tiny rural churches—which desperately need to grow but can't, because of people who act as though warm smiles went out of fashion at the dawn of the Coolidge administration.

The LOAF Project is a civic-minded group of Adventists whose mission is to discover what causes the LOAF and then to eradicate it—if not from the face of the Earth, at least from the face of each Adventist you meet at church. The following is a *précis* of their findings.

What causes the Little Old Adventist Face? Ingesting a steady diet of lentil loaf has stamped a gulag-like pall upon many a countenance, but LOAF Project researchers believe there are even more powerful factors.

Lack of salvation-assurance ranks high—the stark terror that if a single forgotten unconfessed sin remains on the Books, you'll lurch to life at the wrong end of the millennium.

Another LOAF generator is the "*stern pioneer*" fallacy. Scan the sepia photos of Adventists who posed for the camera in the days of Ellen White, and you'll see steady stares and long, grim farmers' mouths. Some ill-informed but conscientious Adventists may assume that, hey, if John Byington or Uriah Smith or James White or even Ellen herself never cracked a photo smile, who are we to leer with levity?

The truth is that back then, film speed was agonizingly slow.² Photo subjects sat absolutely still for several seconds, during which the photographer removed the lens cap, counted out loud, and then replaced it. If you smiled and then moved your muscles ever so slightly mid-photo, your face smeared. Even photos of actresses and music-hall dancers, who were accustomed to wearing frozen smiles on stage, still have a deer-in-the-headlights look.

Are there benefits to the LOAF? Certainly. LOAF-wearers frighten babies and small children, which is good for them. Modern kids, with their playdates and gated communities, are too sheltered from reality these days and need a good fright from time to time.³

Another benefit of LOAF-wearing is scaring away church visitors who might make undesirable members, such as people who laugh too much or who sport smile-dimples. Stock your foyer greeter team with LOAFs, and visitors will quickly get the point and not return. (And if they do manage to hang on through potluck, the lentil loaf will do the rest.)

Losing the LOAF. Most Adventists agree, however, that the LOAF is a bad thing. So what's the best way to eradicate the Little Old Adventist Face? Researchers are working hard on options like SWAT (Sweetened With A Tickle) teams, who would deploy to the foyer and dig

their fingers into each LOAF-wearer's ribs with a matey "Gootchie-gootchie."

Right now, the quickest short-term LOAF repairer is the BunTightener®. Most LOAF ladies wear their hair in buns, and (with their permission) the BunTightener® is concealed inside the bun, attached to the main hair strands. When activated, the clockwork mechanism gradually pulls the hair back, stretching the skin on the face, inducing a smile. (See Fig. 2.)



Fig. 2.

While this happens, of course, the attention of nightmare-prone children should be directed elsewhere.

Once converted over, the former LOAF-er is given a button to wear that says, "Lose the LOAF!"

¹ Thanks goes to my distant cousin, the reformed cartoonist Heinrich, for the artwork.

² I'm not making this up. Time exposure was the only way to do it back then, even outdoors.

³ Such as provided in an earlier era by Grimm's Fairy Tales (the original versions).

Do you have a tough question? Adventist Man has "the answer." As a former member of "the remnant of the remnant," Adventist Man was ranked 8,391 of the 144,000—and working his way up. Now he relies solely on grace and friendship with Jesus. You can email him at atoday@atoday.org.

Begin the New Year with Great Reading



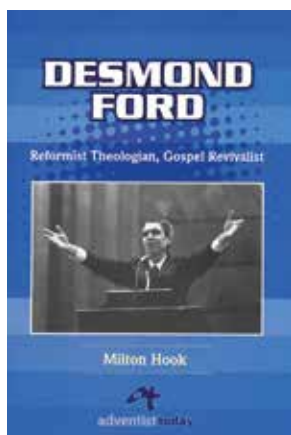
Something's Happening,
By Y. Suzanne Ócsai:

An in-depth look at the first 10 years of GYC, one of the most powerful youth movements in Seventh-day Adventist Church history....
Introductory Price: 19.95



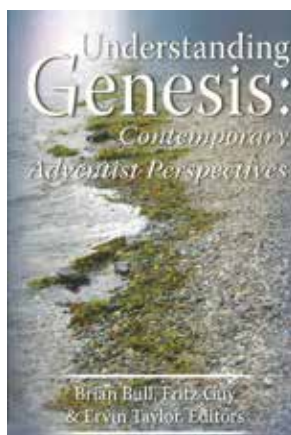
Genesis Versus Darwinism,
By Desmond Ford:

This book studies the objections to the early chapters of Genesis and calls into question the influential teachings of Charles Darwin....
Introductory Price: 19.95



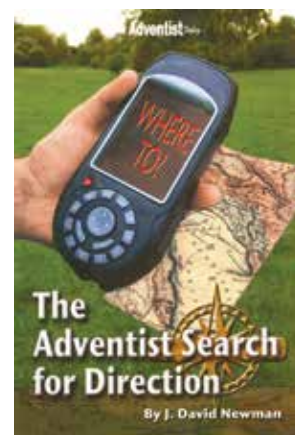
Desmond Ford:
Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist
By Milton Hook, Ed.D:

A meticulous account of the ministry of Desmond Ford, a strong, controversial voice in Adventist evangelicalism....
Regular: 19.95; Special: \$14.96



Understanding Genesis:
Contemporary Adventist Perspectives; Brian Bull,
Fritz Guy, and Ervin Taylor, editors:

A scientifically literate review of how to intelligently read the Genesis account....
Regular: 19.95; Special: \$14.96



Where To?:
The Adventist Search for Direction
By J. David Newman:

AT editor Newman writes about the direction of the Church, in light of recent emphases at the General Conference level....
Regular: 11.95; Special: \$8.96

Order Today!!!

Web: www.atoday.org
Phone: (503) 826-8600
Mail: *Adventist Today*
PO Box 1135
Sandy, OR. 97055-1135

Prices good thru April 1, 2016
Phone for bulk and/or wholesale prices