



OCTOBER 2023

Ministry[®]

INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

All about Jesus!

The prophetic
word through
the ages

PAGE 6

10

MESSANGER OF THE
LORD AND THE GREAT
CONTROVERSY

14

"A GREAT WHILE BEFORE
DAY": THE ALTAR LIFE OF
ELLEN WHITE

18

AFFIRMING PROPHETIC
MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL
CHURCH



YouTube advertising
is a proven strategy
to raise awareness of
your local church and
attract a younger
audience to your
evangelistic events.¹

**IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER
TO REACH PEOPLE ONLINE.**

**62% of all internet users
watch YouTube every day.²**

Our digital marketing team will create a target audience within your community so the right people see your video ads at the right time. We'll carefully manage your campaign to raise awareness for your local church and attract a larger, younger audience to your evangelistic events.



¹Rester, H. (2022). Developing and testing concise evangelistic videos for Millennials and Generation Z in Columbia, Missouri [Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University]. Digital Commons at Andrews University. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/771/>

²Ceci, L. (2022, March 15). U.S. YouTube usage frequency 2020. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/256896/frequency-with-which-us-internet-users-visit-youtube/>

**Learn more at
EvangelismMarketing.com/YouTube**



All about Jesus!

The prophetic word through the ages

ALBERTO R. TIMM

From Old Testament prophets to New Testament gifts, prophecy is about lifting up Jesus!

10

Messenger of the Lord and the great controversy

MERLIN D. BURT

The author urges us to read Ellen White's books "in connection with the Bible," including *The Desire of Ages*, "her masterpiece on the life of Jesus."

14

"A great while before day"

The altar life of Ellen White

DWAIN N. ESMOND

Discover the Power that lies behind a faithful life and a fruitful ministry.

18

Affirming prophetic ministry in the local church

JUD LAKE

Let your members know that Ellen White's writings come with blessings: "they lead us to the Bible" and "they lead us to Christ!"

22

Compilations and adaptations—are they the real thing?

TIM POIRIER

Discover how *The Story of Jesus* and *The Desire of Ages* are part of the adaptation and compilation processes. Don't be upset, be blessed!



EDITORIAL | 4

MERLIN D. BURT



REVIVAL & REFORMATION | 5

SEAN BRIZENDINE



PRACTICAL POINTERS | 13

DARRYL THOMPSON



RESOURCES | 26

EKKEHARDT MUELLER



DATELINE | 29

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors
12501 Old Columbia Pike,
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA

www.ministrymagazine.org

ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org

[@MinistryMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine)

[@minmag](https://www.instagram.com/minmag)

[@ministrymagazine](https://www.youtube.com/ministrymagazine)

ministrymagazine.org/podcast

Vol. 95, No. 10 © 2023

EDITOR

Pavel Goia

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jeffrey O. Brown

CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein,
Gerald Wheeler

SENIOR EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Sheryl Beck

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

John Feezer IV

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Jonathan Walter

SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANT

Gloria Massenburg

INTERNATIONAL EDITORS

Chinese—Robert Wong
French—Bernard Sauvagnat
Japanese—Masaki Shoji
Kiswahili—Herbert Nziku
Korean—Soon Ki Kang
Portuguese—Wellington Barbosa
Russian—Michael Kaminsky
Spanish (Inter-America)—Saúl Ortiz
Spanish (South America)—Marcos Blanco

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

Jonas Arrais, Lucas Alves Bezerra,
Thadi Johnson Jacob, Darius
Jankiewicz, Patrick Johnson, Victor
Kozakov, Kwame Boakye Kwanin,
Wendell Wilcox Mandolano,
Passmore Mulambo, Herbert
Nziku, Ventslav Panayotov, Josney
Rodriguez, Maurice Valentine, Ivan
Williams, Ted N. C. Wilson

LEGAL ADVISOR

Todd R. McFarland

ADVERTISING

advertising@ministrymagazine.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS/

RENEWALS/ADDRESS CHANGES

subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org
+1 301-680-6511
+1 301-680-6502 (fax)

COVER

316 Creative / Midjourney

LAYOUT

316 Creative

SUBSCRIPTIONS

12 issues: United States US\$32.99;
Canada and overseas US\$47.00.
To order: send name, address, and
payment to Ministry® Subscriptions,
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver
Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA.
www.ministrymagazine.org/subscribe

DIGITAL DELIVERY

Print subscribers can sign
up for digital delivery at
www.ministrymagazine.org/digital.

TO WRITERS

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts.
Before submitting, review the writers'
guidelines at www.ministrymagazine.org.
Please send manuscripts via email to
ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.

Ministry
in Motion

Host: Anthony Kent
Cohost: Ivan Williams
www.MinistryinMotion.tv

Ministry® has been published
monthly since 1928 by the Ministerial
Association, General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists®. Ministry is a

peer-reviewed journal.

MINISTERIAL SECRETARY

Ramon J. Canals

ASSOCIATE MINISTERIAL SECRETARIES

Jeffrey O. Brown, Aurora Canals, Robert
Costa, Pavel Goia, Anthony Kent

Printed by Pacific Press® Pub. Assn.,
1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687

Standard mail postage paid at Nampa,
Idaho. (ISSN 0026-5314)

Member of Associated Church Press.

Adventist®, Seventh-day Adventist®, and
Ministry® are the registered trademarks
of the General Conference Corporation of
Seventh-day Adventists®.

PRINTED IN THE USA.

BIBLE CREDITS: Scripture quotations marked AMPC are from the
Amplified Bible Classic edition, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964,
1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Scripture
quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard
Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry
of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version.
Scripture quotations marked NIV are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW
INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011
by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
Scripture quotations marked NKJV are from the New King James
Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.
All rights reserved.



Published by the Seventh-day Adventist
Church. Read by clergy of all faiths.



Merlin D. Burt, PhD, is the director of the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



A shining light on God's love

The entire Bible and the process of prophetic revelation is Christ-centered. The book of Hebrews begins with these words: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb. 1:1, 2).¹

Upholding Scripture

Jesus, Himself the Word of God, pointed to the Old Testament Scriptures on the road to Emmaus as He spoke with two of His disappointed disciples. “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” . . . And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25, 27). The apostles pointed back to the Old Testament as the anchor of their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It is a characteristic of inspired writers to point to the Bible as the basis of all faith and experience. We should expect the same attitude and practice from any person in these last days called by God to manifest the spiritual gift of prophecy (Rom. 12:6).

Uplifting Jesus

Having a correct view of Jesus—His incarnation, life, and death on the cross—has been a significant factor in distinguishing between true and false teachers and prophets. In confronting false gnostic prophets who denied the full humanity of Jesus, the apostle John emphasized that “by this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 John 4:2). He continued, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 John 7).

The apostle Peter provided a similar emphasis as he reflected on seeing Jesus glorified on the “Mount of Transfiguration.” He wrote: “We have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp

shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19). Jesus calls Himself the “bright morning star” (Rev. 22:16). Prophetic messages will always connect us to Jesus, resulting in the miracle of conversion and a life of consecration to God.

Her constant focus was Scripture, Bible principles, and the love of God revealed in Jesus and His plan of salvation.

Affirming gifts

Peter states that in the last days, God will pour out His Spirit, “and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17). The apostle Paul writes, “earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy” (1 Cor. 14:1). Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen White (1827–1915), one of the church’s founders, exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. Her constant focus was Scripture, Bible principles, and the love of God revealed in Jesus and His plan of salvation. The church believes her writings, guided by the Holy Spirit, are a true manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy, connecting us to Jesus in these last days of earth’s history before His second coming, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10).

As you read this *Ministry* issue, it is our prayer that the writings of Ellen White will be correctly studied in connection with the Bible. May they encourage you to lift up our God and Savior Jesus Christ, to better serve in ministry to the world. “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).



¹ Scripture is from the English Standard Version.



Sean Brizendine,
MDiv, pastors in a
three-church district in
the Upper Peninsula
of Michigan, United
States.



It would be well

Since 2016, I have been overwhelmingly enamored by the life of Jesus. I started to read a chapter a day from *The Desire of Ages* in my devotional life. It has been a source of tremendous strength to my life and ministry, and for good reason.

In the midst of the change that has engulfed our world in the last few years, the one constant is, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8, NKJV). I can testify that by beholding His life, I have become changed. “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.”¹

Point them to Christ

As I interact with people in life and ministry, I continually desire to point them to Christ and the blessing that comes from beholding Him. I know that by nature the heart is evil, but Jesus promises to cleanse it when it is fully yielded to Him—and that new heart results in a change of life amid growth in grace. “When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.”² Such an experience is a gift God gives us so that we can have His abiding presence in all circumstances and be prepared to minister to others out of the overflow of beholding Christ.

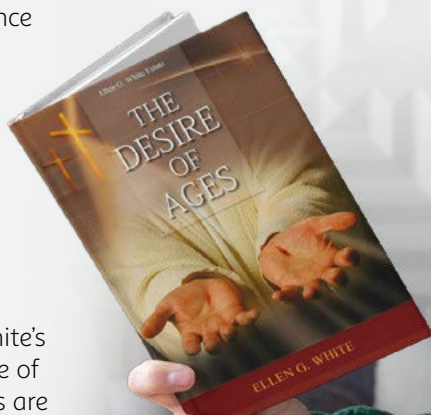
I concur with the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research that “Ellen G. White’s writings uplift the narrative of Scripture . . . These writings are

an important, inspiring resource that should be utilized by Adventists as a means of growing closer to Jesus.”³ It is no wonder that “a strong majority of Adventists around the globe affirm her prophetic role and consider her writings as a result of the spiritual gift of prophecy.”⁴

I have been blessed to journey through Scripture and compose biblical songs with tunes that have become “the soundtrack of my life” as they have rescued and refreshed me in times of spiritual drought. Ellen White’s books have drawn me closer to my Lord and His Word. May your personal devotions be deeply filled with ever-fresh glimpses of Jesus to reflect to all whom God’s providence brings along your life and ministry path.



- 1 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 83.
- 2 White, 676.
- 3 ASTR, “Global Views on Ellen G. White and Her Writings,” Blog, General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, November 23, 2020, <https://www.adventistresearch.info/global-views-ellen-g-white-and-her-writings/>.
- 4 ASTR.



When they opened their eyes and looked around all they saw was Jesus, only Jesus” (Matt. 17:8, Message). Is this simple gospel message still prevalent and relevant today? We live in volatile times when almost everything is being critically assessed and subjectively redefined from both personal and cultural perspectives. Within this context, many often see God’s prophetic messages as obsolete and in need of being updated to become more relevant to our generation. Undeniably, if we want to communicate those messages more effectively, we must speak the language of our own time. But are the messages themselves *outdated*, and do they need to be *updated*?

In dealing with this controversial subject from a biblical perspective, we should recognize two basic realities. One is the sociocultural settings to which the messages have been delivered over time and which can vary significantly from each other, thus requiring new approaches (1 Cor. 9:19–23). The other reality is the sinful human nature—in constant need of God’s transforming and sanctifying grace—that has remained the same through the ages (Rom. 3:23). Indeed, an ongoing tension exists between the varying expositions of the prophetic messages and their unchangeable content.

Old Testament times

In his insightful article “The Old Testament Prophets as Social Reformers,” George Stibitz explained that “all the prophets, named or unnamed, who appear[ed] in the course of Israel’s history were in like manner God-sent ambassadors to the *kings* and *citizens* of Israel” and addressed “*man*, but as a *citizen*, not as an individual.”¹ Yet, they “were less concerned with a reformation of the conduct of man toward his fellow-man than with the regeneration of the heart by urging the people and their rulers to return to God, the fountain of spiritual life, and its fruit of social purity and righteousness.”² Such was the case in all the different sociocultural settings in which the prophets delivered their divinely inspired messages.

The antediluvian civilization had degraded itself in an unprecedented apostasy (Gen. 6:5; Matt. 24:38), and God called Noah as His “preacher of righteousness” to that generation (2 Pet. 2:5).³ The warning of an impending flood was limited to that time (Gen. 9:8–17), but the call to repentance from sin would be echoed by all later prophets. Jesus not only regarded the Flood as a historical event but also foretold that

“‘as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man’” (Matt. 24:37–39, NIV).

The pilgrimage of the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years was a unique experience (Acts 13:18), but Moses’ instructions at Sinai were of an enduring nature (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:1–22). At the border of the Promised Land, Joshua advised the Israelites, “‘Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you’” (Josh. 1:13). No wonder that King Josiah based his religious reforms on the Book of the Law (2 Chron. 34:14–33). The book of Malachi reminded God’s people, “‘Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments’” (Mal. 4:4).


Elijah’s confrontation with the false prophets on Mount Carmel in northern Israel was a singular event (1 Kings 18), but the reproach for forsaking “the commandments of the LORD” and the call for the restoration of true worship (1 Kings 18:18, 21, 22, 36–40) were repeated by John the Baptist and by the end-time Adventist movement (Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 17:9–13).⁴ Daniel made similar calls for repentance and reformation in Babylon (Dan. 4) as did Jonah in Nineveh (Jonah 3). In each case, the speech addressed the local needs, but the message itself remained essentially the same.

As already mentioned, later prophets often referred to the writings of earlier ones (like Moses) as the abiding word of God. Daniel, for example, trusted “the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet” (Dan. 9:2). Isaiah highlighted the abiding nature of the prophetic word in his classic statement, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isa. 40:8).

New Testament times

Jesus exercised His prophetic ministry when Palestine was under Roman rule, which generated a new sociocultural and political setting. But instead of replacing the teachings of Moses, He told the Jews who were persecuting Him, “‘For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?’” (John 5:46, 47). Later, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, “‘Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill’” (Matt. 5:17). Then He cited several commandments, unveiling their deeper spiritual implications (vv. 17–48).

The apostle Paul took a similar stand. To the Corinthians, he evoked some adverse incidents of the Israelites in the wilderness, warning them that “all these things happened to them as examples,



Alberto R. Timm,
PhD, is an associate
director of the Biblical
Research Institute,
Silver Spring, Maryland,
United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

All about Jesus!

The prophetic word
through the ages





and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:1–11). He emphasized the enduring nature of the prophetic word when he stated to the Galatians, "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!" (Gal. 1:8, NIV). And to the Roman procurator Festus, the apostle affirmed, "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar" (Acts 25:8, NIV).

The way the New Testament writers used the Old Testament confirms the abiding nature of the prophetic word.⁵ Typological fulfillments did replace the shadow with the reality. But even so, "there is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today."⁶ "The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other."⁷

The Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century rescued the Scriptures from the medieval antibiblical traditions. In his commentary on Genesis 37:9, Martin Luther stated, "I have concluded a pact with my Lord God that He should not send me visions or dreams or even angels. For I am content with this gift which I have, Holy Scripture, which abundantly teaches and supplies all things necessary both for this life and also for the life to come."⁸ Actually, the Protestant *sola Scriptura* and *tota Scriptura* principles acknowledge the abiding nature of the prophetic messages.

John Calvin affirmed that "God did not bring forth his Word among men for the sake of a momentary display, intending at the coming of his Spirit to abolish it. Rather, he sent down the same Spirit by whose power he had dispensed the Word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the Word."⁹ Reflecting on Ephesians 4:11, Calvin distinguished between extraordinary/temporary officers (apostles, prophets, and evangelists) and ordinary/permanent offices (pastors and teachers). But he admitted that the Lord raised up the first three officers "at the beginning of his Kingdom, and now and again revives them as the need of the times demands." In his view, a prophet "either does not exist today or is less commonly seen."¹⁰

The time of the end

The New Testament teaches that Jesus' departure ushered in the Holy Spirit (John 16:17; Eph. 4:8) and the Holy Spirit bestowed gifts on believers, including the gift of prophecy (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). Daniel (8:17; 11:35, 40; and 12:4, 9) had referred to the "time of the end" as an occasion in which "the times demand[ed]" a special prophetic assistance (as stated by Calvin).¹¹ Revelation announces that in the last days there will be a manifestation of the spirit of prophecy, illuminating "the truth revealed by Jesus" (Rev 19: 10, AMPC).

Seventh-day Adventists believe that this spiritual gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.¹² In illuminating "the truth revealed by Jesus," her prophetic role sought "to serve three basic purposes: (1) to direct attention to the Bible, (2) to aid in understanding the Bible, and (3) to help in applying Bible principles in our lives."¹³

Her prophetic assistance was not only fundamental in the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist movement but plays a very crucial role for the church as we near the end of human history on earth. Actually, we live today in a time when "nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines"¹⁴ and many Christians believe that "the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings."¹⁵ In this context, we are reminded that "the word of God is the only fixed, changeless thing that the world knows. Like its Author in character, it is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever.'"¹⁶

Consistent with the gift of prophecy, Ellen White addressed many unique situations, but her teachings are timeless and remain relevant for us today. She was conscious of that reality when she wrote in 1906, "Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last."¹⁷

God still speaks

Prophetic writings comprise ongoing dialogues between universal principles and particulars of time and place. But even those particulars are backed up by universal principles that make those writings relevant across time. Since all of us are sinners (Rom. 3:23) and Christ's unchangeable mission has always been to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21), the prophetic appeals to the people of old are still pertinent for us today. Indeed, the form can change over time, but

the essence remains the same. We affirm with Paul, “You may as well know now that it was my secret determination to concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ and the fact of his death upon the cross” (1 Cor. 2:2, Phillips). Our challenging

times require new approaches to communicate the gospel message more efficiently, but those approaches should never undermine our whole commitment to the prophetic word itself, whose message is all about Jesus.



- 1 Geo[rge] Stibitz, “The Old Testament Prophets as Social Reformers,” *Biblical World* 12, no. 1 (July 1898): 20, 22 (emphasis original).
- 2 Stibitz, 22.
- 3 Unless otherwise noted, Scripture is from the New King James Version.
- 4 Hans K. LaRondelle, *Chariots of Salvation: The Biblical Drama of Armageddon* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 174–185.
- 5 See, e.g., G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
- 6 Ellen G. White, “Ellen G. White Comments—Acts,” in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 1061.
- 7 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 104.
- 8 Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* (Albany, OR: Books for the Ages AGES Software, 1997), 6:329.
- 9 Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.9.3.
- 10 Calvin., 4.3.4–5.
- 11 See Gerhard Pfandl, *The Time of the End in the Book of Daniel*, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992).
- 12 Denis Fortin, “Ellen G. White and the Gift of Prophecy: The Test of a Prophet” (lecture notes, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), <https://www.andrews.edu/~fortin/EGWTest.htm>.
- 13 T. Housel Jemison, *A Prophet Among You* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1955), 371. See also Merlin D. Burt, “The Foundational Orientation of Ellen White’s Prophetic Ministry,” in *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History*, ed. Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Esmond (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2015), 270–288.
- 14 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 15.
- 15 Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4 (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1884), 339, 340.
- 16 Ellen G. White, “Preach in Regions Beyond,” *Bible Echo*, May 28, 1894, 164.
- 17 White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, 55.

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.

PROFESSIONAL FREE PEER TO PEER COACHING TRAINING

Quickly Learn How to Coach Fellow Leaders

OCTOBER 19 | 6 PM PDT | 8 PM EDT

REGISTER NOW
www.gregcoach.com

~~\$200~~ FREE

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN?

- ✓ How to peer coach others
- ✓ How to ask powerful questions
- ✓ How to deeply listen to others
- ✓ How to convey trust and safety

BENEFITS

- ✓ Develop your leaders
- ✓ Proven method worldwide
- ✓ Coaching skills instantly usable
- ✓ Feel the transforming power of coaching



“Tremendous positive response from our pastors regarding this coaching training!” – Royal Harrison – Ministerial Director – Southern California Conference



Dr. Greg Schaller

is a professional leadership and team coach who also owns and operates an ICF Leadership Coaching School.

Greg works with Andrews Universities LeadLab training coaches, also Conferences, Unions, GC missions, and missional leaders worldwide.



Evan Kinne

CEO AXCS Capital

“Greg’s stable, affirming, responsive approach as a coach was integral to establishing a calm sense of direction as I transitioned from President to CEO, during a difficult time.”

SI Schaller International

COACHING SCHOOL

US: Reno, Nevada | EUROPE: Scicli, Sicily
GS@gregcoach.com

Messenger of the Lord and the great controversy



Merlin D. Burt, PhD, is director of the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

Ellen G. White wrote, “I claim to be simply a messenger of God.”¹ She went through an intense conversion process during her childhood and early teenage years. Through it, she came to know Jesus as her Savior. Beginning in December 1844, her first visions had a distinctive emphasis on the redemptive love of God revealed through Jesus. As a result, her early writings and ministry uniquely focused on the cosmic conflict between God and Satan, beginning with the Son of God “pleading with His Father” and obtaining “permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race” to the future when “the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem are thrown open and swing back on their glittering hinges, and the glad and joyful voice of the lovely Jesus is heard, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, bidding us to enter.”² Her lifelong presentation of this theme would lead to the current five-volume Conflict of the Ages series. She wrote almost continuously on this subject from 1858 until the end of her life in 1915.

A vision of the conflict

On Sunday, March 14, 1858, at a little schoolhouse in the small farming community of Lovett’s Grove, Ohio, USA, Ellen White received a two-hour vision presenting an expansive view of the ongoing spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan. White later recollected: “As I was led to speak upon the coming of Christ and the resurrection and the cheering hope of the Christian, my soul triumphed in God. I drank in rich draughts of salvation. Heaven, sweet heaven, was the magnet to draw my soul upward, and I was wrapt in a vision of God’s glory.”³ The setting was a funeral for a thirteen-month-old boy named John. His parents, William and Betsy Avery, were not yet believers. As the vision continued, the family left to bury their little boy, but quite a few people remained in the schoolhouse until

the vision ended.⁴ As for the Averys, they soon accepted the Sabbath and remained faithful Seventh-day Adventists for the rest of their lives.

Ellen White first published what she had received in this vision in a little book titled *Spiritual Gifts*.⁵ That single volume would expand to four by 1864. This first version of the great controversy theme then developed into a second series of four books titled *The Spirit of Prophecy*.⁶ Published between 1870 and 1884, it had 1,706 pages of material. Volume 4, released in 1884, contains content similar to what appears in *The Great Controversy*. This last book, containing important information on the end of time, was so appreciated that between 1884 and 1888, Adventist publishing houses produced ten editions totaling 50,000 copies. The third edition received an attractive green cover and was illustrated with 22 lithographic images and a picture of Ellen White. Colporteurs sold it widely.

A third series

After traveling to Europe between 1885 and 1887, Ellen White was led by God to begin a third series of books on the great controversy theme. She wrote and published the Conflict of the Ages between 1888 and 1916. Its five volumes total 3,760 pages, including the indexes.

The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation came off the press in 1888. Prepared especially for the public, it included an appendix (not authored by her) with additional information. First published as a colporteur book, it had an attractive cover and illustrations. Many thousands of copies were sold between 1888 and 1907. The publishers had to repair the printing plates for the 1907 edition due to their overuse, but Ellen White realized that it would soon be necessary to create new ones. In 1910, she began revising the book, making minor improvements in the text and expanding the

appendix. Published in 1911, her revised edition is essentially the same as the current edition of *The Great Controversy*, although the appendix has been updated through the years.

The second book of the Conflict of the Ages series was *Patriarchs and Prophets*.⁷ Published in 1890, this book was also released as an illustrated colporteur book. It covered the period from when sin began in heaven with the rebellion of Lucifer through the creation of the world, Adam and Eve's sin, the universal Flood, the stories of Abraham and Moses, and the history of the Israelites up to the end of David's life.

The Desire of Ages, her masterpiece on the life of Jesus, appeared in 1898. The third and largest book in the series, it had 866 pages, including the index.⁸ Because she had written more on this vital subject than could be contained in one volume, she published two additional books: *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (1896) about Jesus' sermon on the mount, and *Christ's Object Lessons* (1900) on the parables of Jesus. The latter book was also first released as a colporteur book, which Ellen White donated to raise funds for Adventist schools.

The fourth book in the series, *The Acts of the Apostles*, covered the period from Christ's ascension to heaven through the apostolic period. It came off the press in 1911.⁹ Not initially sold as a colporteur book, it was an enlargement of her earlier book *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, with content from *Sketches From the Life of Paul*.

The final book of the Conflict of the Ages series was *Prophets and Kings*. It first appeared under the cover title *The Captivity and Restoration of Israel*.¹⁰ The publishing houses released it as a colporteur book in 1916. When Ellen White passed away on July 16, 1915, two chapters had not been fully finished. Her secretaries gathered material from manuscripts she had previously written and completed the volume.

A work of great responsibility

It is vital that Seventh-day Adventists read and study these writings, particularly the current five-volume Conflict of the Ages set, which contains Ellen White's full understanding of the topic based on the Bible and enriched by many prophetic visions and dreams that she received throughout more than 70 years of ministry.

These volumes are a blessing not only to Seventh-day Adventists but also to the rest of the world. The colporteur emphasis given to their widespread circulation demonstrates this

intention. Ellen White explained her ministry and writings in the following manner: "I have a work of great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world. I have published many books, large and small, and some of these have been translated into several languages. This is my work—to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me."¹¹

I invite you to read and preach her writings in connection with the Bible, particularly the five-volume conflict series. The last half of *The Great Controversy* is particularly relevant. It unmasks Satan's deceptions in these last days of earth's history and provides guidance and encouragement for those who love God and honor His commandments.

Jesus, our Savior, is coming soon in the clouds of glory. We will behold Him. Then He will gather us up into the cloud of angels with all the redeemed of the ages, and we will forever be with the Lord. Maranatha—come, Lord Jesus.



- 1 Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1998), 170.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 126; Ellen G. White, Letter 3, 1851.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1860), 265, 266.
- 4 W. R. H. Avery, "Former Days," *Welcome Visitor*, February 22, 1905, 3.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts: The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels* (Battle Creek, MI: James White, 1858).
- 6 Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy: The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1870, 1877, 1878, 1884).
- 7 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets or the Great Conflict Between Good and Evil as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890).
- 8 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1898).
- 9 Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911).
- 10 Ellen G. White, *The Story of Prophets and Kings as Illustrated in the Captivity and Restoration of Israel* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1916).
- 11 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8 (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 236.

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.



Optimizing the impact of Ellen G. White's writings

Darryl Thompson is an associate director for the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Since Ellen G. White's death on July 16, 1915, the Ellen G. White (EGW) Estate has shared her prophetic ministry and writings to support the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its members. The White Estate uses several methods to help achieve its goals:

1. Maintain Ellen G. White's letters, manuscripts, artifacts, and memorabilia in physical and digital custody.
2. Ensure, as far as possible, the integrity of Ellen White's writings.
3. Distribute her books in print and digital formats.
4. Promote translations of her books into major languages.
5. Prepare new compilations and modern language adaptations from Ellen White's writings to meet the ever-changing needs of the church and world.
6. Promote Bible and Ellen White study by creating resources like EGW writings apps and websites, EGW audiobooks, study guides, and daily social media content.
7. Provide a database of answers to frequently asked questions about Ellen White and her ministry.
8. Maintain searchable articles and reference works to encourage the study of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Our websites and applications

To facilitate this mission, the White Estate manages three major websites:

Whiteestate.org covers Ellen White's life, ministry, and her estate. It illuminates her background, experiences, and writing impact.

Ellenwhite.org offers researchers, pastors, and teachers a treasure trove of resources from the White Estate vault. An extensive collection of Ellen White's materials helps users learn about and research her ministry.

Egwwritings.org offers all of Ellen White's major works in 138 languages for free. It provides spiritual nourishment with more than 100,000

pages of original letters, manuscripts, periodical articles, books, and pamphlets. More than 3,000 published books, Spirit of Prophecy reference works, Bible versions, Bible concordances, Ellen G. White and Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentaries, and Ellen G. White dictionaries are also freely available.

To complement these websites, we have released five apps, one each for Android, iOS, iPadOS, macOS, and Windows devices. These apps let users read, study, and listen to Ellen White's writings for free. Search for "EGW Writings 2" in your device's app store.

Our websites and apps reach an average of eight million monthly users from 192 countries and territories worldwide.

Tips to maximize the spiritual impact of Ellen G. White's writings

1. *Regular personal study* of Ellen White's writings will help shape your faith and character. Our apps and websites offer daily Bible readings, Ellen White book reading plans, and devotional reading plans via email or in our apps.
2. *Language accessibility.* Let people know Ellen White's writings are available in many native languages.
3. *Witnessing* through sharing our websites and apps can help encourage others. Especially share our 10 new ".pub" websites that have a single book website. For example, check out greatcontroversy.pub or stepstochrist.pub.
4. *Share* daily quotes, insights, and White Estate resources with friends or members on social media.
5. *Local church engagement.* Form Ellen White study groups or reading circles within your church. Allow people to discuss and ask questions at seminars.
6. *Personal testimonies.* Share how Ellen White's writings helped shape your life and faith. Your testimony may inspire others to study her counsels.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ►

It does not surprise close observers that Ellen White had a deep and meaningful relationship with God. The sheer scope of her literary output suggests it. At the time of her death in 1915, Ellen White had written more than 5,000 periodical articles, 200 tracts and pamphlets, 35,000 typewritten manuscript documents and letters, and more than 2,000 handwritten letters and diary materials that, when copied, total another 15,000 typewritten pages.

But if we judge a life by what happens after the person is gone, then we should consider Ellen White among the greatest individuals who ever lived. She cofounded a church with more than 22 million current members and birthed an international educational system and a global health network, to say nothing of the millions of lives transformed by her writings. By any measure, Ellen White's accomplishments demonstrate that her life was consequential and meaningful.¹

An open secret

On the face of things, White's life, literary output, and ministry seem almost improbable. She was terribly injured in childhood at the age of nine when "a girl about thirteen years of age, becoming angry at some trifle, threw a stone that hit me on the nose."² She later noted that the accident would "affect my whole life."³ And it did. It forced her to leave school as she struggled to breathe through her nose, retain what she was learning, and write without trembling. Although she now faced unending health challenges, Ellen's life was an exceedingly fruitful spiritual one. What was her secret? Everything Ellen White accomplished during her 70-year ministry was the product of her devotional life—her "altar life," if you will.

To understand Ellen White's passion for Jesus, one really needs to spend time in the personal, day-to-day chronicles of her life—her diaries. (You can read them online at EGWWritings.org.) Beginning in 1859, she kept an intermittent record of her life experiences, ministry doings, and interaction with people. Even a cursory glance at her diaries reveals several things.

Unable to sleep well due to physical ailments, especially later in life, Ellen White would arise "a great while before day," much like the Jesus she loved and cherished (Mark 1:35, KJV). Following those 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. wakeup inscriptions are notes of such thanksgiving and praise that they leave the reader almost speechless. The sweet savor of gratitude to God constantly perfumed

her life. Time and again, one will read, "My heart is thankful" or "I praise God for His goodness."

Ellen White was grateful to God for simple things, such as a good night's rest. Often sleep fled in the face of difficult periods, such as the one in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, that she wrote about on October 26, 1890: "I have not been able to sleep since three o'clock. . . . I have too much thinking to do. I dressed and then enjoyed a precious season of prayer, and have been writing since four o'clock. It is now half past six." In the afternoon, she spoke to a large audience and commented, "I feared I should not have strength, but the Lord gave me His grace and His power to address the people from 2 Corinthians 3:18."⁴


Some entries in her journals are filled with little mundane tidbits of information while others are flush with deep heart-searching commentary and witness. On January 1, 1859—a Sabbath—the 31-year-old Ellen wrote, "It is the commencement of the new year. The Lord gave James liberty Sabbath afternoon in preaching upon the necessary preparation for baptism, and to partake of the Lord's Supper. There was much feeling in the congregation."⁵

Moments with a worshiper

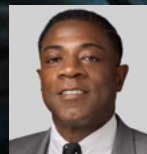
During my brief research journey into the vision Ellen had on November 3, 1890, in Salamanca, New York, I had the opportunity to read her diary entries leading up to the vision and her subsequent recitation of it on March 8, 1891. On Sabbath, October 11, 1890, she found herself in Adams Center, New York. "I spoke to a full house," she wrote. "There were quite a number of Seventh Day Baptists present. Extra benches were brought in and placed in the aisles; the gallery was full. I spoke from John 17:3."⁶ The Lord blessed her ministry that day, and a powerful testimony service followed, but what she recorded at the end of this day's entry says much about her thoughtfulness: "We were gratified to meet the aged servants of God on this occasion. We have been acquainted from the rise of the third angel's message with Elder [Frederick] Wheeler, who is now nearing 80 years. We have been acquainted with Elders [H. H.] Wilcox and [Charles O.] Taylor for the last 40 years. Age is telling on these old standard-bearers, as well as upon me."⁷

Frederick Wheeler and fellow pioneers Wilcox and Taylor had long labored with Ellen White. She had great respect for aged workers and wrote strongly about their care and support.⁸

The next day, October 12, 1890, White rose at 4:15 a.m. and had a deep season of prayer before beginning to write. She then wrote, "I feel grateful



Dwain N. Esmond, PhD (cand.),
serves as an associate director of
the Ellen G. White Estate and lead
evangelist for the Back to the Altar
global worship initiative, Silver Spring,
Maryland, United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

"A great while before day"

The altar life of Ellen White

to the Lord that I endured the taxation of yesterday much better than I expected. I do ask the Lord for strength and grace, and praise His holy name that I do receive decidedly, according to the promise given, the very things I most need.”⁹

Here is one of the defining characteristics of Ellen White’s altar life. We see it the very next day, on October 13, as she readies herself to speak to a large gathering, the majority of whom were not Seventh-day Adventists, and then later in the evening to another big audience. In preparation, she prayed, “May the Lord guide me in regard to the subjects to the present to the people.” “I praise the Lord that in our feebleness we may take hold upon divine power.”¹⁰ She later concluded of the evening meeting,

I had much freedom in speaking from 2 Peter 1, dwelling upon the precious promises.

My special burden is to arouse the laymen in the church to action, that every individual shall sense his duty to become a worker together with God.¹¹

Despite the day’s challenges, White still found the energy to write “Witnesses for Christ,” a nine-page document on how to engage laypersons in the ministry of the church. How was she able to speak to multiple groups in a single day and still pen deep and searching notes of guidance for God’s people? She completely depended on God for everything in her life—wisdom, guidance, health, safety, family wellness, power in ministry, and more.

Between earth and heaven

Ellen White’s trust in God was warranted because hers was a life lived between earth and heaven. She lived on earth, but her purpose was heavenly. Her 1890 diary contains a powerful story that demonstrates why she maintained her personal worship altar so carefully.

On October 30, 1890, White and a few others left South Lancaster for Salamanca, New York. During the trip, she contracted a very bad cold that so affected her that she desired to return home rather than continue. One night, while in great pain and “feeling disheartened in reference to my journeying,”¹² she went to her sleeping quarters on the train and knelt by a chair to pray. That’s when something miraculous happened: “I had not uttered a word when the whole room seemed filled with a soft, silvery light, and my pain and disappointment and discouragement were removed. I was filled with comfort and hope and the peace of Christ. . . . The presence of Jesus

was in the room.”¹³ Sleepiness quickly vanished as Ellen basked in the presence of God. “What a night that was to my soul!” she later wrote. “Every breath was prayer mingled with praise to God.”¹⁴

But God was not through with Ellen White that evening. She later received a vision in which she saw a gathering of leaders in the church’s publishing ministry. They were deciding to remove any reference to the Sabbath from the *American Sentinel* magazine, the church’s religious liberty journal, as well as any mention of the name Seventh-day Adventist.

Several months later, in March 1891, the General Conference session was held in Battle Creek. Ellen White, the morning devotional speaker, used Matthew 5:16 for her Sabbath message: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” On more than one occasion during the meetings, Ellen White attempted to share her previous vision but became frustrated when she could not.

Later that night, a meeting of publishing house representatives and leaders from the National Religious Liberty Association convened. It ended in a stalemate around 3:00 a.m., with the religious liberty representatives refusing to use the *Sentinel* to present their principles. If it did not remove any mention of the church’s name and the Sabbath. What they did not know was that at about the same time, God was waking His messenger with a clear directive. She was to go at 5:30 a.m. and share with this group what she had been shown in Salamanca, New York.

Ellen White obeyed. She spent an hour recounting what she had witnessed in vision. The audience sat in stunned silence. Pricked by the Holy Spirit, the president of the National Religious Liberty Association spoke: “I was in that meeting. Last night after the close of the conference some of us met in my room in the Review office where we locked ourselves in and there discussed the questions and the matter . . . presented to us this morning. We remained in that room until three o’clock this morning. If I should begin to give a description of what took place and the personal attitude of those in the room, I could not give it as exactly and as correctly as it has been given by Sister White. I now see that I was in error and that the position that I took was not correct. From the light . . . given this morning, I acknowledge that I was wrong.”¹⁵ The Religious Liberty Association later gathered and rescinded the action that they had been staunchly advocating.

Two takeaways

So, what are we to make of these brief scenes from the life of God's inspired messenger? First, Ellen White's life and ministry remind us that nothing can substitute for daily time spent with God. It is in these moments that He sustains, directs, and "visions" His servants. Second, her altar life reminds us that we can take everything to God—all our joys and sorrows—and He will supply whatever we need for each day. No other point comes through more powerfully in Ellen White's diaries than that God was her Source of

power, help, hope, and support each day. She spent time in His presence so that she might be spiritually nourished. In turn, Ellen White was prepared for such moments as the one she encountered at the 1891 General Conference Session.

No matter where you serve in ministry, God's purposes for you are weighty and meaningful. As we reflect on Ellen White's communion with God, if your altar life is not where it should be, change it now as much is riding on the quality of time you spend with Him each day. May He bless you as you pursue and are pursued by Him.



- 1 "Ellen G. White Named Among 100 Most Significant Americans." *Adventist Review*, December 1, 2014.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915) 17.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1922), 13–15.
- 4 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc. *The Salamanca Vision and the 1890 Diary* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1983), 14, 15. <https://ellenwhite.org/media/document/8866>.
- 5 Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 1, *The Early Years: 1827-1862* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), 396.
- 6 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., *The Salamanca Vision*, 6.
- 7 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 6.
- 8 "Ellen G. White, *The Retirement Years* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990). See chapters 2 and 5: "Usefulness of Older Workers" and "Care of the Aged."

- 9 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., *The Salamanca Vision*, 6.
- 10 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 7.
- 11 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 7.
- 12 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 57, 58.
- 13 Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 3, *The Lonely Years: 1876-1891* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), 466.
- 14 Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., *The Salamanca Vision*, 58.
- 15 Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), 27, 28.

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to **ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org**.

QUARTERLY DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING



JANUARY 6, 2024
APRIL 6, 2024
JULY 6, 2024
OCTOBER 5, 2024



SCAN ME

DOWNLOAD FREE MATERIALS AT **[REVIVALANDREFORMATION.ORG/PRAYERDAYS](https://revivalandreformation.org/prayerdays)**



Affirming prophetic ministry in the local church

Allegations that Ellen White was a plagiarist, deceiver, manipulator, religious bully, liar, alcoholic, and much more continue unabated today. “I expect these raids will be made against me till Christ comes,” she wrote. Every opposer to “our faith . . . makes Mrs. White his text. They begin to oppose the truth and then make a raid on me.”¹ How should a busy pastor respond when such claims affect the local church? The old sports adage “The best defense is a good offense”² suggests a way forward.

As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, a positive campaign that remains sensitive to answering the negativity will prove most helpful. In this framework, I suggest three strategies that can begin the process of affirming Ellen White’s prophetic ministry in the local church.

Inform yourself

First, inform yourself on both the issues and the resources available to assist enquiring parishioners. The series *Meeting Ellen White*, *Reading Ellen White*, and *Walking With Ellen White*³ by George Knight is a good starting place to begin with or to refresh yourself on the significance of Ellen White. New converts to Adventism should read all three, but especially *Reading Ellen White*. At the outset of their new religious experience, it is imperative that they approach Ellen White with the correct principles of interpretation. Doing so will inoculate them against the more unrestrained interpretations of Ellen White floating around the church today.

*The Pocket Ellen White Dictionary*⁴ is another book that will serve not only seasoned readers of Ellen White but also new converts, especially in getting off to a good start with her writings.

Plenty of advanced works on Ellen White offer differing nuances and conflicting viewpoints on her prophetic status. The following recommendations reflect scholars who view Ellen White as a genuine postcanonical prophet. I believe a working knowledge of their contents will be a great asset to you as a pastor for not only understanding Ellen White better but also communicating this knowledge in various ways to your congregation.

For theological and historical insight, see *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History*, edited by Alberto Timm and Dwain Esmond; for theological reflection, see *Understanding Ellen White*, edited by Merlin Burt, as well as George Knight’s *Prophets in Conflict: Issues in Authority*. For finding

Jud Lake, ThD, DMin, is a professor of preaching and Adventist Studies, School of Religion, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee, United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

answers to criticisms, see Francis D. Nichol’s classic work, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*. For general apologetic principles, see *Ellen White Under Fire* by Jud Lake. For a historical perspective, see Theodore N. Levterov’s *Accepting Ellen White: Early Seventh-day Adventists and the Gift of Prophecy Dilemma*. Finally, keep close at hand *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, edited by Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon.⁵

For a sense of the historical trajectory of how Adventists have viewed Ellen White’s writings throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, check the works of historians Michael Campbell and Gilbert Valentine. George Knight’s *Ellen White’s Afterlife* is an indispensable read on this topic as well.⁶ Matthew Lucio’s carefully researched and endlessly interesting *The Adventist History Podcast*⁷ brings out the historical context of Ellen White’s prophetic ministry. The Ellen G. White Estate website also contains a wealth of information.⁸

There are, of course, plenty of other studies, not to mention the many doctoral dissertations on Ellen White.⁹ But the above resources, in my view, will provide a foundation for helping parishioners and addressing any questions or concerns they may have about Ellen White.

Foundational issues

As you read such resources, look for discussion on four foundational issues: (1) the nature of Ellen White’s experience in revelation-inspiration, (2) the basis of her authority in relationship to the final authority of Scripture, (3) principles of interpretation, and (4) her worldview as expressed in the cosmic conflict theme throughout her writings. They are the aspects that need the most emphasis in educating everyday Adventist Christians. Beyond that, one can probe the controversial areas, such as how to respond to the charges of plagiarism and the shut door, as well as the myriad of other attacks against her.

Ultimately, it is your own reading of Ellen White that will confirm her profound contribution to Christian living. Remember to read her vertically, in other words, one book at a time from start to finish. That way, you get the flow

of thought in each volume and avoid piecemeal reading void of the literary context. Horizontal reading is following the themes in her writings as well as doing phrase or word searches. While the latter approach is obviously important, you should do it in the context of vertical reading and study. Many blessings are in store for those who read Ellen White vertically.

Context of confidence

Second, create a context of confidence in Ellen White's prophetic gift by preaching expository sermons. Expository preaching makes the Scripture text the center of the sermon. The sermon thus seeks to focus on the truth in the text. While expository sermons may have various shapes or forms, their core is to draw out the meaning of the text in its inspired context and proclaim it as the Word of God to the listening congregation. Ellen White affirmed this approach when she wrote that the minister should "speak in sincerity and deep earnestness, as a voice from God expounding the Sacred Scriptures."¹⁰ When practiced by a pastor who values Ellen White's prophetic ministry, expository preaching sends a message to the church that while the prophetic gift has an important place, Scripture is the supreme source of truth.

As to the use of her writings in the sermon, Ellen White's advice was that "when you go to the people . . . preach to them out of the Bible." An occasional quote from Ellen White is not precluded here if you employ it in such a way that shows that the basis of the sermon is Scripture.¹¹

In general, an intentional stress on the supremacy of Scripture in church life is essential not only to our Adventist identity but also to a full appreciation of Ellen White. The entire thrust of her prophetic ministry was the Bible, and when that same focus occurs in the local church, it will vindicate her writings in their intent and meaning. Used with this understanding fixed in the congregation's mind, the prophetic gift will bring blessing rather than misunderstanding. Members will then hear Ellen White's prophetic voice with much more respect and appreciation.

Building a positive relationship

Third, help your church members build a positive relationship with the writings of Ellen White. For those individuals affected by the many criticisms of Ellen White, let them know that Adventist scholars have addressed those issues. Based on your knowledge of the above resources,

you can respond yourself or guide them to helpful sources that provide carefully studied answers to the charges.¹² Many Adventists, I believe, especially the younger generation, are affected more by apathy than by criticisms of Ellen White. The pastor can address this situation by focusing on her personal life. Tell her story—the laughter and depression, the trials and victories, the suffering and joy that filled her daily life. Put all of it in the context of her extraordinary gift. When done without hagiography, rehearsing the personal side of Ellen's life as well as the supernatural facet can boost interest in what she had to say. Also, it can serve as a positive response to ad hominem attacks on her character.

A more traditional way of building a positive relationship with Ellen White in your church (but still a good one) is the yearly Spirit of Prophecy Day, sponsored by the White Estate.¹³ It is a good time to preach an expository sermon on the prophetic gift *from the Bible* and employ Ellen White's experience as an application. You do not even have to use her in the sermon. Just preach the entire message from a passage in the Bible about the prophetic gift and bring her into the worship service through other creative ways. Perhaps, for example, you could have several respected individuals in the church share their favorite Ellen White quote or present a testimony of what the gift of prophecy means to them. Such approaches offer excellent opportunities to foster a healthy view of Ellen White before the congregation.

Study the lamp, not the finger

Prayer meeting series or seminars have traditionally been an excellent time to promote a balanced and biblical understanding of Ellen White's prophetic ministry. But remember that whenever you educate your church about Ellen White's prophetic ministry, the main thing is to lead them into a deeper love for Jesus and obedience to Scripture. That is the main thing. If I point to a lamp and say, "Look!" my intention is for you to see the lamp, not my finger. But if you study my finger instead of the lamp, you have missed my point (pun intended).¹⁴

The various teaching events you provide in the church offer you, as the pastor, a golden opportunity to instruct parishioners on how to rightly interpret the prophetic gift, recognize and avoid extreme interpretations, and focus on Jesus and Scripture. After all, isn't the main thing to keep the main thing the main thing?¹⁵

There are many other ways to promote a positive relationship with Ellen White's writings; the sky is the limit to your creativity. You might try, for example, using repeated phrases in various venues of your ministry (board meetings, private conversations, Sabbath morning announcements, teaching and preaching situations, etc.) that communicate a positive biblical message about Ellen White's writings. For example, whenever I teach about Ellen White, I might say: "I want you to read Ellen White, but I want you to read your Bible more." "The problem with Ellen White is not Ellen White; it is misguided followers." "Ellen White is a prophet to the Scriptures."¹⁶ "Ellen White's vision for the Christian life is biblically deep and spiritually profound." Notice that it is not the same thing as quoting Ellen White, though that is also important when done with prudence. Come up with your own phrases that communicate a fortifying and positive message about Ellen White to your local church family.

Generate revival

Counteract the negativity about Ellen White with a positive message. Silence on the gift makes

room for the weeds of skepticism and apathy to grow in the garden of church life. During the years of 1851–1855, James White decided not to publish in the Review anything related to his wife or her prophetic messages due to strong prejudice against them. In those years, the church experienced "a spiritual decline and negligence toward the gift of prophecy."¹⁷ Late in 1855, however, leadership voted to publish the visions openly, and in the following years, the church grew and flourished. A little more than a decade later, Uriah Smith reported that the fruit of Ellen White's visions in the church was four-fold: (1) they "tend to the purist morality," (2) they "lead us to Christ," (3) they "lead us to the Bible," and (4) they bring "comfort and consolation to many hearts."¹⁸ The pioneers thus discovered that Ellen White's prophetic ministry, when rightly understood and appreciated, would generate revival in the church. Like the old Kellogg's Cornflakes commercial, perhaps it is time to stand up and help your church taste Ellen White again for the first time.

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to **ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org**.



- 1 Ellen G. White to Uriah Smith, July 31, 1883 (Letter 3, 1883).
- 2 This article is based on my book, *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010), chap. 14: "The Best Defense Is a Good Offense," 264–279, and supplements that chapter.
- 3 For the entire series, see George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996); George R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997); George R. Knight, *Ellen White's World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998); and George R. Knight, *Walking With Ellen White: The Human Interest Story* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999).
- 4 For the free online version of *The Pocket Ellen G. White Dictionary*, see <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/14209.2#0>.
- 5 Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Esmond, *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015); Merlin Burt, ed. *Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015); George Knight, *Prophets in Conflict: Issues in Authority* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2020); Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen White and Her Critics* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1951); Jud Lake, *Ellen White Under Fire*; Theodore N. Levterov, *Accepting Ellen White: Early Seventh-day Adventists and the Gift of Prophecy Dilemma* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016); Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds., *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013).
- 6 See Michael W. Campbell, *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019); Michael W. Campbell, *1922: The Rise of Adventist Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022); Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Struggle for the Prophetic Heritage: Issues in the Conflict for Control of the Ellen G. White Publications,*

1930–1939 (Westlake Village, CA: Oak and Acorn, 2018); and George R. Knight, *Ellen White's Afterlife* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019).

- 7 See "Learn Adventist History With Us," Adventist History Project, <https://www.adventisthistorypodcast.org/>.
- 8 "Issues & Answers Regarding Inspiration and the Life and Work of Ellen G. White," Ellen G. White Estate, <https://whiteestate.org/about/issues/>.
- 9 See "Dissertations," James White Library, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/>.
- 10 Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 147.
- 11 See "The Editor Interviews H.M.S. Richards," *Ministry*, April 2018, 15, 16.
- 12 See, for example, Alberto Timm's helpful response to the highly critical book by Steve Daily, *Ellen G. White: A Psychobiography* (Conneaut Lake, PA: Page Publishing, 2020): https://media2.whiteestate.org/documents/Book_Review_EGW_A_Psychobiography.pdf.
- 13 Resources can be found at <https://whiteestate.org/resources/sop/>.
- 14 This analogy is derived from Fritz Guy as quoted in Knight, *Reading Ellen White*, 28.
- 15 This often-quoted statement originated with time management specialist Stephen Covey.
- 16 I am indebted to Merlin Burt, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, for this saying.
- 17 Levterov, *Accepting Ellen White*, 39; for the whole story, see 36–40.
- 18 Uriah Smith, *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1868), 5–8.

Compilations and adaptations—are they the real thing?

Please send me a list of Ellen White's original writings, not her compilations" is a request we often receive at the White Estate. But behind this lie unspoken and incorrect assumptions undermining the trustworthiness of compilations:

- Compilations contain material that Ellen White did not write.
- Compilations have changed Ellen White's words.
- Compilations misrepresent her teachings by taking statements out of context.
- Compilations reflect the biases of the compiler.
- Compilations are uninspired, in contrast to her original books.

How might a pastor respond to the concerns of those who hold such views regarding the many Ellen White compilations available to his or her members? And what exactly do they mean by "compilations" in contrast to Ellen White's "original writings"? This article provides some practical ways that Seventh-day Adventist pastors can

better help their congregation understand and properly use compilations.

Strictly speaking, the term *compilation* refers to a work created by gathering material from various sources. Most church members, however, are referring to any Ellen White book put together by someone other than Ellen White herself—particularly after her death.

Affirm the underlying concern

While it is true that some persons discredit Ellen White compilations because they reject certain statements that conflict with their own views, in most cases, those who express distrust of compilations do so because they sincerely want to read only what Ellen White genuinely wrote. They value her writings highly and do not want to be misled by someone with an agenda who has strung together Ellen White quotes to serve their own purposes.

We should affirm that motivation. Innumerable publications do misrepresent Ellen White's teachings because the compiler has selected only those quotations that support his or her own



Tim Poirier, MTS,
is vice director of
the Ellen G. White
Estate in Silver
Spring, Maryland,
United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

cherished ideas or supplied headings that do not accurately reflect what she is saying. Ellen White herself shared this same concern:

Many from among our own people are writing to me, asking with earnest determination the privilege of using my writings to give force to certain subjects which they wish to present to the people in such a way as to leave a deep impression upon them.

It is true that there is a reason why some of these matters should be presented: but I would not venture to give my approval in using the testimonies in this way, or to sanction the placing of matter which is good in itself in the way which they propose."¹

Considering her statement, it is appropriate to take a cautious approach when it comes to compilations.

Differentiate between compilations

Most church members do not know how the White Estate has produced compilations in

contrast to unofficial or private ones. Providing information about the process and the safeguards involved will help members recognize the important differences between them. White Estate compilations are not the work of a single individual. Yes, one person may take the lead in searching for significant material on a topic, but the manuscript then goes through a thorough reading and review process involving many other individuals. It then seeks input from others knowledgeable in the subject area.

During the process, those involved give attention to see that Ellen White's teachings are fairly represented. They usually chose subtitles and headings from her own expressions so as not to impose meanings she did not intend. Where explanatory notes are essential for context, they are clearly identified as being supplied by the estate, usually placed within square brackets.

Share the purpose

Some may turn away from compilations because they do not read as easily or smoothly. It is important to point out that most compilations

are not intended to be read through continuously like a devotional book. Topical compilations, such as the three *Selected Messages* volumes or *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, serve more as encyclopedic reference books. Because Ellen White has written so much on so many topics, their purpose is to bring together into one place her most significant statements on a specific issue as a matter of convenience. Otherwise, we would be left spending countless hours searching through the entire database of her writings every time we wanted to find her key instruction on a given matter.

The issue of context

By their very nature, compilations take passages from their original contexts and place them in a new setting. A quotation first written in 1868 might be followed by one composed in 1890 or 1905. One statement might have been originally addressed to a church leader and another to a group of students. It is an inherent weakness in any compilation that should be readily acknowledged.

Speaking about those who were seeking to make their own personal compilations, Ellen White expressed this very point: “In taking account of such an enterprise, there are many things that must come into consideration; for in using the testimonies to bolster up some subject which may impress the mind of the author, the extracts may give a different impression than that which they would were they read in their original connection.”²

With that concern in mind, it is important to remind everyone that all quotations in an official White Estate compilation include a reference indicating the source for the statement, often with the year of original writing or publication. That allows the reader to go back to the source document to read the quotation in its original context. In the EGW Writings app or the database at egwwritings.org, this can be done with a single tap or click of the mouse. Providing the source reference also assures that the statement is indeed from Ellen White’s own writings and has not been added by someone with a hidden agenda.

Share her expectation of posthumous compilations

It will probably come as a surprise to most church members that Ellen White specifically included “the printing of compilations from my manuscripts” among the tasks she assigned to

the Trustees of her Estate in her Last Will and Testament. She recognized that her writings, including those still unpublished at the time of her death, would have continuing benefit in meeting the needs of the church as it carried out its mission. In most cases, official compilations have been produced at the request of a particular ministry of the church that is seeking to learn, follow, and share the instruction we have been blessed to receive through the Spirit of Prophecy.

Explain that many “original” books included a compilation process

It may be helpful to explain that Ellen White did not usually write her books chapter by chapter, as many might suppose. When preparing *Steps to Christ*, for example, she asked her literary assistant, Marian Davis, to comb through her writings to find her choicest material related to salvation and Christian living. The final product was a tapestry of 13 chapters drawing from periodical articles Ellen White had written, *Testimonies for the Church*, and even selections from her private letters. It is entirely Ellen White’s material but “compiled” and arranged according to her direction and under her supervision.

The same can be said, to a large extent, regarding *The Desire of Ages* and most of her books published after the 1870s. Of course, the major difference between those volumes and the compilations produced after Ellen White’s death is that when she was alive and therefore involved in the manuscript preparation, she was not only giving instructions regarding what to include or not include but also composing new material that filled gaps and made for smooth connections. Nor was it necessary for her assistants to insert the original source reference after each passage and thus interrupt the flow of the text. Finally, she could read the finished chapters herself to ensure that they accurately represented what she wished to communicate.

Emphasize that it is the person who is inspired

To say that *The Desire of Ages* is inspired but such books as *Child Guidance* or *Evangelism* are not is to place an artificial wedge between the format of those volumes and the author. We must emphasize that it was Ellen White who was inspired. We do well to let ourselves be instructed by the truths she wrote under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, whether those words appear in a book published in 1898 or one released in 2018.

Explain the purpose of adaptations

Some church members point to the various adaptations of Ellen White's writings as evidence that they have been changed and cannot be trusted. Such adaptations include updated English, inclusive language, condensations, abridgments, and even some paraphrases. Those works are not intended for readers who are comfortable with Ellen White's nineteenth-century literary style or her books of more than 500 pages.

It can be helpful to explain that Ellen White, in her own day, granted permission for her son Edson to adapt selections from her writings to reach a younger and less educated reading audience. *Christ Our Saviour* was the result, first published in 1896 and still available today under the title *The Story of Jesus*.

The purpose of adaptations is to draw readers to Ellen White's writings who would otherwise never continue reading past the first paragraphs of one of her current books. Careful effort is made to keep as close to Ellen White's language as possible while recognizing that nineteenth-century English sentence structure and changed word meanings can be a significant obstacle, especially to younger readers, in understanding and appreciating her writings.

Pastors can assure their members that adaptations are not intended to take the place of the original books. Nor are they ever given the same title as the original book. Additionally, the EGW Writings app and egwwritings.org database place adaptations in a separate category called "Modern English."

One more thing

Some church members might have been told that the White Estate brings out new compilations so that the church—and the White Estate in particular—can keep making money from Ellen White's writings. While it is true that a modest royalty on sales from her English-language books used to go to the General Conference, which provides a budget for the White Estate's ministry, no royalties have been collected from Ellen White's books since 2011. All the sales income goes toward the expenses of the publishing houses and their book distributors. In addition, it can be pointed out that all her writings are available for free access at egwwritings.org.

Helping members better understand the purpose, benefits, and limitations of the Ellen

White compilations can be a continuing educational challenge. We must educate our members to properly study and understand her writings and use them as "a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."³



- 1 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 58.
- 2 White, 58.
- 3 Ellen G. White, "An Open Letter From Mrs. E. G. White to All Who Love the Blessed Hope," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 20, 1903, 15.

Share your thoughts on this article by writing to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.

Here are some additional resources to aid in addressing common misconceptions:

Collins, Norma. "Compilations—What They Are and What They Are Not." Ellen G. White Estate. <https://whiteestate.org/issues/Compilat.html>.

Fagal, William. "Adapting the Writings of Ellen White: Is There a Need?" *Adventist World*, May 2011. <https://issuu.com/adventistworldmagazine/docs/2011-1005/22>.

Kaiser, Denis. "How Ellen White Did Her Writing." In *Understanding Ellen White*, edited by Merlin D. Burt. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015. <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p13959.684&index=0#highlight=13959.684|0>.

Knight, George. "Compilations: Official and Unofficial." In *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings*, chapter 4. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997.

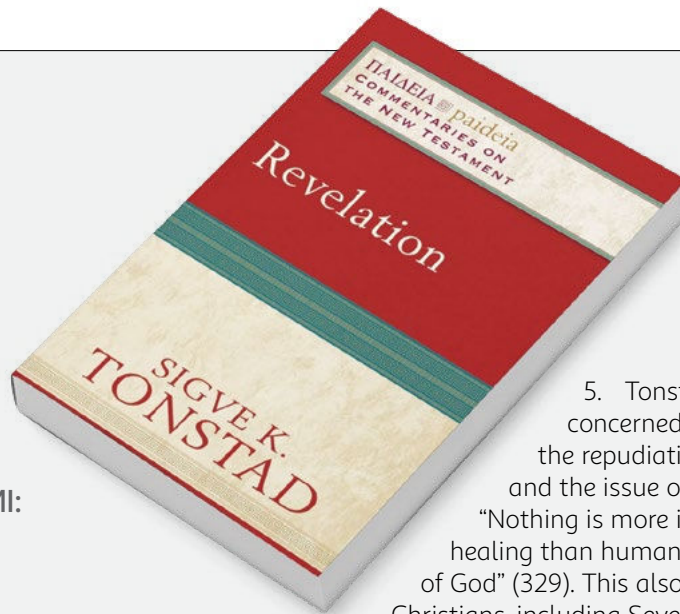
Timm, Alberto. "Compilations and Condensations." *Adventist World*, March 2018. https://issuu.com/adventistworldmagazine/docs/aw03-18_web/24.

White, Arthur L. "The Preparation of a Posthumous E. G. White Book." In *Messenger to the Remnant*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1969. <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p650.1406&index=0#highlight=650.1406|0>.



Revelation

Sigve K. Tonstad, Paideia
Commentaries on the New
Testament, Grand Rapids, MI:
Baker Academic, 2019.



Sigve K. Tonstad is a professor of religion and assistant professor of medicine at Loma Linda University. He is a prolific writer and has published a number of books, mostly with non-Seventh-day Adventist publishers. His commentary on Revelation is part of the Paideia Commentary series in Baker Book House's Academic line. This series focuses on cultural settings and the theology of the discussed biblical book by going through the book, not in a strict sense, but by looking at the larger rhetorical passages.

What pastors can expect

1. The work is well-written and a joy to read. The author has a splendid mastery of the English language with graphic vocabulary, for instance, Satan as the "mudslinger" (181) or "the Maternity Ward of the Ages (12:1–2)" (184). The theological issues discussed are issues that the present generation is wrestling with.
2. The introduction not only deals with the common introductory questions but also has a larger section on the Roman setting (8–19) and deals with the Apocalypse as "Revelation," "Exposé," and "Unveiling" (20–26).
3. Throughout the commentary, the reader will find interesting and surprising insights (e.g., that the tree of life in the new Jerusalem, having trunks on both sides of the river, may represent both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Eden, "immortality and morality," "life and freedom" (325–328).
4. The Old Testament is important to the author, even foundational, especially Genesis 3, Isaiah 24, and other prophetic books. He emphasizes Genesis and Revelation as the bookends of Scripture.
5. Tonstad is concerned about the repudiation of God and the issue of theodicy. "Nothing is more in need of healing than humanity's view of God" (329). This also applies to Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists.
6. He rejects the concept of an intermediate state of the soul and the idea that the redeemed are permanently in heaven (291), which is a given to Adventist theology but not so in the rest of the theological world.
7. The author works with certain presuppositions, as we all do. In his case, he works with the biblical book as it comes. The presuppositions include, among others, that the Apocalypse has a cosmic perspective that is more than the "Roman reality" and has a "nonhuman aspect" (e.g., 19, 214, 215). He says this perspective may be called the "Cosmic Conflict View" or the "Imitation View" (20). This is the strength of the commentary.
8. More problematic assumptions and positions are (a) Revelation is not about revenge and retribution. There is no violence on God's side: God does not "make Babylon burn" (260). (b) Evil is self-destructive (e.g., 3–6, 294–296, 318). The acting person is Satan, and "the judgment is never juridical but revelatory" (297). (c) Dealing with the 144,000, he suggests a symbolic understanding, adding "although the possibility of male bias and sexual apprehension is not fully muted" (201). Writing about the marriage of the Lamb and Adam and Eve, he makes the puzzling statement, "the exclusionary zones of marriage in human experience—*only* her, *only* him, or *only* the other one [?]—to the exclusion of everyone else, some single, some disappointed, and some widowed and divorced, are now erased by a marriage embracing all" (274). (d) There seems to be a trend toward universal salvation (298, 317, 318, 330, 331). For example, the mourning of the tribes of the earth in Revelation 1:7 is "not a 'too late' scene" (50). On the second resurrection in Revelation 20 and the final judgment, he states that "with

Ekkehardt Mueller, ThD, DMin, is an associate director (ret.) of the Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



the judgment come *return, resurrection, and restoration* (20:13). . . . For victims, hope resides in restoration rather than in seeing the perpetrator of violence punished" (298). How far he is willing to take that is unclear to this reviewer.

9. The reader can expect some illustrations and images. He mentions, for example, Hitler and Napoleon and their support by masses of people. He also narrates his own experiences, which makes the commentary lively.

What pastors cannot expect

1. Since this is a theological commentary and not an exegetical commentary, certain verses, concepts, and phrases are not discussed. The commentary presents a big picture based on the presuppositions mentioned above.
2. This is a commentary for a non-Adventist publishing house, which brings with it some limitations. However, the author himself rejects preterism, historicism, and futurism. Pastors and other readers will not see this as a typical Adventist commentary. The author interprets, for instance, the seven seals and the seven trumpets but does not apply them to historical events. With him, there is no interpretation reaching from the time of John to the end of history by identifying certain successive

historical events. With the first beast of Revelation 13, he comes close to the papacy, but then he seems to draw back: "Revelation operates at the level of symbols and representations. Drawing lines from the symbols to historical realities is a fraught enterprise, as all the dominant schools of interpretation prove" (215). He is correct about abuses of historicism, which have also caused most theologians in other denominations to shy away from historicism, and we must be very careful in what we claim and make sure that it is biblically and historically defensible. But while the present reviewer would not understand the cosmic conflict and a sound historical approach as mutually exclusive, Tonstad would.

3. This means also that prophetic time periods, which normally are interpreted according to the day-year principle, are not taken as such by the author of the commentary. He does not explain some (179, 191) or speaks only about a considerable period (185).

The commentary is worthwhile to read—especially for its cosmic conflict approach—if one does not expect a typical Adventist commentary, if one is willing to be challenged, and if one is willing to evaluate the author's work carefully. 📖



PRACTICAL POINTERS *continued*

ChatGPT

ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence–powered chatbot, lets users ask multiple follow-up questions and instantly clarify nuanced answers.

ChatGPT 4 mostly answers Adventist doctrinal questions with well-written answers, though with similar wording. Unfortunately, it still cannot quote from Ellen White accurately. On average, 20 percent of quotes are correct, 20 percent reference the right book but the wrong page, 40 percent find

an accurate quote but give the wrong reference, and 20 percent give a non-Ellen White quote.

The White Estate recognizes that while egwwritings.org will always provide accurate search results, users increasingly prefer AI responses due to their ease of use and intelligent answers to questions without the need to know Ellen White's vocabulary. We are researching open-source AI models to help us create natural language chat-based responses to users' queries. We do not know how long this will take to train and implement, but we must continue to expand ways to obtain our goal of sharing Ellen White's writings with the world. 📖

UPHEAVAL

Coming this October:
A brand-new FREE
one-day evangelistic event
with Pastor Shawn Boonstra

Visit UpheavalEvent.com to learn more



**Watch Pastor Boonstra
introduce this event.**
Visit UpheavalEvent.com/intro



Learn about how a Discover Bible School can help your church grow!

Visit DiscoverBibleSchool.com or call (970) 622-2990



Shining a light on Ellen White

COORANBONG, AUSTRALIA

Two university students are helping younger generations discover a fresh perspective on the life and impact of Ellen White.

Megan Skene and **Zoe Cochrane**, both third-generation Adventists, have a deep appreciation and enthusiasm for Ellen White, but that was not always the case. Growing up, they perceived Ellen White as a distant historical figure placed on a pedestal by many Adventists. As a result, they found it challenging to connect with her.

Their attitudes changed after joining the Adventist Heritage Centre team last year and getting to know Ellen White as a woman who went above and beyond to help her local community during her years living in Cooranbong, Australia.

"I learned about what she did for the community, and for me, actions speak louder than words," said Skene, a psychology student at the University of Newcastle. "She was constantly going out and helping people. She was known as the 'buggy woman' in Cooranbong because she would go around on her one-horse buggy and constantly give food and clothing to people."

Photo: Adventist Record



Skene continued, "Her writings are really important, but I feel we should also focus on how she helped people in the community."

Through an engaging educational program, Skene and Cochrane have already welcomed five school groups this year. Students receive guided tours that provide opportunities to discuss spiritual themes. "In one room, there's a painting of Jesus on a wall, and a student recently pointed up at the painting and asked, 'Who is that?'" Skene recalled. "So, it opens up conversations [beyond history], which is awesome."

Skene believes they are helping to reshape public perception of Ellen White. "Even I'm viewing her in a different and better light," she said. "I love how the tours are making Ellen White and Adventist history more fun and engaging for people. People are finding new ways to connect with Ellen and Adventist history and learning more about their identity." [Tracey Bridcutt]

Chosen for Mission theme for 160th-anniversary celebration

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

Aptly themed "Chosen for Mission," Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders highlighted the 160th anniversary of the official organization of the church during the General Conference (GC) Executive Committee spring meeting on April 11. Through brief presentations, GC secretary **Erton Köhler** and Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research director **David Trim** called leaders and members to keep moving forward as they celebrate the church's beginnings and its legacy. The Adventist Church organization turned 160 on May 21, 2023.

Trim described how, on Wednesday, May 20, 1863, 20 leaders of what he called "the embryonic Seventh-day Adventist movement" gathered in Battle Creek, Michigan. The first action of the 20 delegates was to elect a temporary chairman, Jotham M. Aldrich, and secretary, Uriah Smith.

"Aldrich was thirty-five years old and had only converted in 1860," Trim said. "He had not been a Millerite. Smith was just thirty-one and, remarkably, was not a delegate."

This is worth pointing out, Trim said, because those two facts reveal important insights into the founding of the Adventist Church.

"Many of [the delegates] were young, and they were not snobbish nor exclusive," he said. "Our founders looked for spiritual gifts, and when they saw talent, they would use it to spread the third angel's message."



The next day, Thursday, May 21, 1863, “was the big day,” Trim said. The first step was the selection of eight delegates to draft a constitution, which was approved unanimously, and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was thus formally founded.

The original structure included conferences as constituencies, annual GC sessions, and three permanent officers—a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. There was also an executive committee of three, of which the president was one.

Trim noted, “The purpose of the General Conference, in sum, was to promote unity, identity, and mission.”

Köhler followed Trim to remind Adventist leaders that the Adventist Church will soon hit another major milestone: 150 years of Adventist Mission—the sending of the first church missionary overseas—that the church is planning to highlight in 2024.

Photo: Enno Müller, Adventist Media Exchange



Köhler stated that it has been a long road from the original 3,500 church members and six conferences in 1863 to the current 22.2 million baptized members in 212 countries, 97,811 churches, and 753 conferences and missions.

“We must celebrate our legacy [as we stay] focused on unity, identity, and mission,” Köhler said. “But the past is a place of reference, not for residence.” [Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist Review*]

Literature Evangelists’ Congress and Spirit of Prophecy Summit

MASBATE, PHILIPPINES

The Publishing Ministries Department of the Central Philippine Union Conference (CPUC) of Seventh-day Adventists conducted a conference-wide Literature Evangelists’ (LE) Congress and Spirit of Prophecy (SOP) Summit, held at Winter’s Farm Resort in Masbate, Philippines. With the theme of Identity, Purpose, and Mission, these consecutive events brought together delegates, pastors, and guest speakers to explore the profound significance of Adventist beliefs and the role of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The opening night featured a powerful message from God through **Rey Cabañero**, Publishing Ministries director for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, setting the tone for the event.

Following the LE Congress, the Spirit of Prophecy Summit saw nearly 200 pastors, officers, and directors gathered from across the Central Philippines. The summit emphasized Ellen

G. White as an inspired prophet and messenger of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her writings were recognized as a vital source of support for the church’s biblical truths, beliefs, and doctrines, including topics such as righteousness by faith, justification, sanctification, and perfection.

During the opening night, **Calev Maquirang**, CPUC executive secretary, stressed, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church is grateful for the gift of prophecy through Ellen G. White. This gift revealed in her life and ministry is viewed as a distinctive mark of the church before the return of Jesus. It is given to help believers have anticipation for His second coming and encourage believers to utilize their spiritual gifts to prepare the world for His inevitable return.”

Pastor Maquirang added, “Ellen G. White emphasized the importance of spreading Adventist literature widely, comparing it to the scattering of autumn leaves, and she called for distribution in cities and villages and reaching as many people as possible. We encourage everyone to engage in this very important work before the probation of salvation closes so that many will be prepared for the coming of Jesus.” [Nadeth Quinto, Central Philippine Union Conference]

BE INSPIRED.



Download the brand-new AWR360° app!

Inspiration and a full media library at your fingertips!



visit: awr.org/apps



AWR360°
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Adventist World Radio 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Let's Connect!

[f awr360](https://www.facebook.com/awr360)

[i awr360](https://www.instagram.com/awr360)

[y awr360](https://www.youtube.com/awr360)

[awr.org/videos](https://www.youtube.com/awr360)

[awr.org/apps](https://www.youtube.com/awr360)

Ministry®

1350 N. KINGS ROAD
NAMPA, ID 83687-3193

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CALLING ADVENTIST PASTORS FROM NORTH AMERICA



INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION.

BRING YOUR
YOUNG ADULTS ON A
SHAREHIM TRIP.

Nº 036428

PASTORS & SPOUSES: **FREE**
OTHERS: **\$499** plus \$499 from church
INCLUDES: **Flight, Hotels, & Meals**

Space is limited. Learn more at sharehim.org

- Build long-term friendships with your young adults
- Awaken a passion for sharing the gospel
- Develop tomorrow's ministry leaders

Open to NAD pastors bringing two or more young adults (age 18-35) from their districts



shareHim

2023 trip schedule

May 24-June 5 Puebla, Mexico
May 31-June 12 San Francisco, CA
June 7-19

2024 schedule coming October 1st.
SEE SHAREHIM.ORG

Aug 9-21 Guatemala
Aug 9-21 Tuxtlan, Mexico
Aug 9-21 Bogota, Colombia
Aug 9-21 Ica, Peru
Aug 16-28 Medellin, Colombia

Aug 13-25 Bogota, Colombia
Sep 13-25 San Salvador, El Salvador
Oct 4-16 Ciudad Juarez, Mexico
Oct 4-16 Mexicali, Mexico
Oct 4-16 San Pedro De Macoris, D.R.
Oct 18-30 Toluca, Mexico
Oct 25-Nov 6 Lima, Peru