The Re-parenting of Seventh-day Adventists? Reflections on the Historical Development, Substance, and Potential of Ellen White Studies

Abstract *Christianity has many "fathers" (often described as living before or after the historic Council of Nicea that convened 325 AD) and a "mother," Mary, who remains a focus of vigorous controversy. As a branch of Christianity, Sabbatarian Adventism acknowledges three co-founders: Joseph Bates (1792-1872), James White (1821-1881), and Ellen Gould White (1827-1915). During 1919, Adventist leaders who had shared direct, sustained experiences with Ellen White, knowing first-hand how she did her work, expressed their insights and convictions about the significance and use of her writings clearly and constructively. However, for a complex set of reasons, such historical perspectives were so lost or distorted that within fifty years few Adventists possessed a clearly-drawn, historical picture of their church's mother. As certitude was confronted by data from newly available primary sources, conflict erupted. In secular wars, truth is often the first casualty; in religious controversy, there are usually imbalances; such realities are instructive for interpreting the past forty years of Adventism. This paper explores evidence indicating a re-parenting initiative may have potential for some Adventist members; it also suggests how such a process might proceed effectively.*[1]

Introduction

Confession is said to be good for the soul. During the early 1970s at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, I was deeply influenced by a professor who had trained under Carl Rogers in Chicago. More than that, I was attracted to Clinical Pastoral Education as a process-based approach to pastoral care. Although conflict in the church subsequently focused my attention upon the discipline of history, I believe that trans-disciplinary approaches to problem issues may have potential. Therefore, this paper reverts to the human sciences and pastoral counselling in its search for an appropriate symbol (re-parenting) that may offer Seventh-day Adventists a useful way to deal with a serious dilemma that has become pervasive during the past forty years.

First, a brief illustration. One of the more difficult issues I faced as a pastoral counselor involved the relationship between a very astute scientist and his aged mother. Due to the complexity of familial interactions and conflicts over years, the scientist came to believe his mother was untruthful and uninterested in solving the issues that shattered their loving relationship. The scientist's mother felt so threatened by his inability to "hear" her

[1] Should some of the content of this paper appear to be leading the reader into unfamiliar territory, it may be of value to at least scan several documents that I have published elsewhere: "Seventh-day Adventist History in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources," *The Journal of Religious History* 14:3 (June 1987), 307-326; "Ellen White: Mother of the Church in the South Pacific," *Adventist Heritage: A Journal of Adventist History* 16:1 (Spring 1993), 30-40; "Contextualizing Recent Tensions in Seventh-day Adventism: 'a constant process of struggle and rebirth'?" (2008); "A Brief, Annotated Introduction to the Field of Adventist Studies for Higher Degree Students" (2009). The third and fourth items are freely available on the website of Avondale College.

concerns that she employed a solicitor as the only channel of communication regarding the matters under dispute. Effective understanding and communication virtually ended, pending a new basis being found for a mother-son relationship.[2] The nature and extent of the contemporary misconceptions about Ellen White indicate that it is appropriate to invite Seventh-day Adventists to reassess the life, writings, and role of their ecclesiastical mother.

I. The *Real* Mary and the *Real* Ellen White

Mary, as the mother of Jesus, is the focus of a vast literature that suggests a wide spectrum of beliefs exist regarding her—with abundant capacity to fuel controversy amongst Christians who describe themselves as Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant. While the biblical data are sparse and extra-biblical sources scant, Mary is portrayed variously–from being an authentic Jewish peasant woman to a sinless mediatrix.[3] Somewhat comparably, Adventists picture Ellen White in contrasting ways: as a genuine inhabitant of the nineteenth century; as an impeccable mouthpiece of the Divine; as a fraudulent manipulator. Ann Taves, while Claremont professor of the History of Christianity and American Religion, observed that "historical sources" discovered since the 1970s "provide a view of the young Ellen Harmon only hinted at in the official writings," and that such discoveries "have proved disconcerting for many Seventh-day Adventists."[4] Despite that reality, the male co-founders of Adventism are subjects of

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[2] Hindsight indicates the process was as essential as it was complex. Its outcomes must be assessed in terms of the individuality of the major participants.

[3] Reference works such as *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* describe the way in which the historical Mary has been accorded Immaculate Conception and corporeal Assumption into heaven. Note the many descriptors applied to her, such as "The Blessed Virgin," "Theotokos" (Mother of God), "Mediatrix of All Graces," and "Co-Redemptress." For a much-discussed account by a professor of medieval history at the University of London, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (Allen Lane, 2009). A summary sentence about another New Testament Mary is apt: "Although the evidence regarding Mary [Magdalene] is slim while legends about her abound, the earliest sources – that is the Gospels – categorically insist that she was a vital figure, most prominently in developing the conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead after his crucifixion." See Chilton's chapter, "Mary Magdalene and History," in *Historical Knowledge in Biblical Antiquity*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Bruce D. Chilton and William Scott Green (Dorset, UK: Deo, 2007), 302-328; cf. Janet Kahl, "Recent Developments in the Academic Study of the Cult of the Virgin Mary," *Journal of Religious History* 33:3 (September 2009), 377-388, www.blackwellpublishing.com/jorh.

[4] See Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 158, 159. It should be noted that while Taves is referring to the evidence that relates to the themes indicated in the title of her illuminating book, her observation is equally applicable to many other features of Ellen White's life and writings. Cf. Hilary M. Carey, "Introduction: Millennium: A View from Australia," *The Journal of Religious History* 24:1 (February 2000), 6-7, who observes that "Adventist historians have been diligent in their accounts of White." In an early journal article of its type, I observed that "sufficient sources are now readily available for substantial and accurate Seventh-day Adventist history to be written" and that such "historiography will expose increasingly the inadequacies of numerous viewpoints current both within the denomination and beyond its borders," "Seventh-day Adventist History," *The Journal of Religious History*, (1987), 308. The published form of a doctoral study has now considerably updated that theme; see Michael Leigh Chamberlain, *Beyond Ellen White: Seventh-day Adventism in Transition* (Teneriffe, Queensland: Post

constructive investigation, not least in recent biographies.[5] However, Adventism's female co-founder does not yet have a widely accepted biography. Two limited attempts–almost three decades apart–to portray the *real* Ellen White encountered sustained attack. Ronald Numbers' study of Ellen White as a health reformer set out to neither praise nor blame but simply to understand her. The effort cost Numbers his denominational employment as an historian and, as well, his citizenship within Adventism.[6] The same circumstances ended the careers of other historians, professionals representing related disciplines, and Adventist members. Between 2004 and 2006, three books by evangelist and educator Graeme Bradford, aiming to present the *real* Ellen White, elicited a chorus of gratitude as well as severe criticism from White Estate, the Biblical Research Institute, and *Ministry*—the worldwide journal for Adventist clergy.[7] Such collisions between faith and fact have fuelled interpretive writing about Ellen White—by convinced supporters and dedicated detractors—that has little historical integrity.

It is high time for Adventists to cease fighting about their spiritual mother and to seek to understand her in terms of all the known and potential evidence. Adventism is a world religion; its sixteen million members should be upfront about the fact that one of their co-founders is a white, North American female who was born and nurtured in New England but subsequently travelled widely in North America and spent almost eleven years in Europe and the South Pacific region. This female parent was a Christian steeped in Methodism who became an ardent Millerite before becoming a Sabbatarian and (arguably) an Evangelical.[8] The facts about her life and writings deserve far more than the unthinking affirmations and trite denials that they so often receive.

Pressed, 2008). For a recent exploration of matters addressed in part by Taves, see an unpublished paper by Frederick G. Hoyt, "Elder Israel Dammon's Wild Maine Show of February 1845: A Critique of a Regrettably Long Delayed Official Response" (Riverside, Calif.: La Sierra University, August 2009).

[5] Gerald Wheeler, *James White: Innovator and Overcomer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2003); George R. Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004).

[6] Ronald Numbers' volume has demonstrated its quality with a third edition, part of the *Library of Religious Biography* series. For an analysis of Numbers' experience in writing the book, see Jonathan M. Butler, "Introduction: The Historian as Heretic," in Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2008), 1-41.

[7] See Graeme Bradford, *Prophets are Human* (Warburton, Victoria: Signs, 2004); Graeme Bradford, *People are Human* (Warburton, Victoria: Signs, 2006); Graeme S. Bradford, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 2006). The Internet carries my comments and those of many others about the component issues; for a review of five books related to the discussion see my article, "Prophets are Human! Are Humans Prophets?" *Spectrum: The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 33:2 (Spring 2005), 73-4.

[8] The literature alluded to in this paragraph includes the tireless research of Frederick Hoyt, some of which has been reported in lectures for the San Diego Adventist Forum; also, see Arthur Patrick, "An Adventist and an Evangelical in Australia? The Case of Ellen White in the 1890s," *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, December 1991, 42-53.

II. The Death of Ellen White and the 1919 Bible Conference

I first attended a series of lectures by Arthur L. White (1907-1991) during December 1957 and January 1958 when tomes like *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, and "Notes and Papers"[9] expressed Adventist orthodoxy about his grandmother. Almost two decades later (1976), Elder White, as secretary of White Estate, was my mentor when I was placed in charge of the newly-opened Ellen G. White/Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre serving Australasia. It is a simple matter of record that during the 1970s Elder White was already scrambling to embrace important evidence regarding Ellen White that was previously unknown to him. We should remember and give credit to Arthur White for spurring the church to develop the chain of research centres that now serve the various geographical sections of the world. However, as it turned out, almost immediately Elder White was "hoist with his own petard" when, suddenly, tens of thousands of pages of original source materials were for the first time available to researchers throughout the world. Arthur White's dilemma may be documented clearly with the help of many items that he wrote during the 1970s, not least two editions of a paper entitled "Toward a Factual Concept of Inspiration."[10] We could also note in detail what he wrote about Ellen White's literary relationship with other authors, as well as his growing understanding of issues relating to theology (for example, the "Shut Door" concept), health, history, and other themes.[11] It was during this time of comparative turmoil that my respected mentor, secretary of White Estate since the death of his father in 1937, learned the startling fact that the Adventist church had convened a significant conference during 1919.

News of the 1919 conference reverberated around the Adventist world in 1978 as an innocent-looking fuse lit by Molleurus Couperus created an explosion that, more than any other single event, changed the course of Adventist Studies.[12] The 1970 issue of

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[9] Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1951); "Notes and Papers Concerning Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy: An assemblage of materials referred to in connection with the presentation of the seminary course S-270 'Prophetic Guidance,' Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1957).

[10] Arthur White's copious writings are accessible in mimeographed and printed volumes, periodical articles, and in the Document and Question-and-Answer files located in the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centers that serve each major geographical region of the world.

[11] See Appendix A, "Ellen Gould White and the Australian Woman, 1891-1900" (MLitt thesis, University of New England: Armidale, 1994) for my reflections after eight years as director of the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Center serving the South Pacific Division. Such centers provide print and microform documentation about Adventism from Millerite times to the present, copies of about 50,000 pages of Ellen White letters and manuscripts, as well as thousands of "Question and Answer" and "Document Files." The possibility of effective research in the discipline of Adventist Studies, other than in archives located in North America, dates from the establishment of such centers throughout the world. Research of this kind has accelerated as higher degree students have been able to choose Adventist Studies at institutions such as Andrews University and Avondale College.

[12] Any person who wishes to understand this subject should begin by reading Michael Campbell, "The 1919 Bible Conference and Its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (PhD diss.,

Spectrum had initiated a process of re-visioning the life and writings of Ellen White in terms of historical reality; the transcripts of the 1919 conversations published in a 1978 issue of the same journal held potential to bring the process to a new level of maturity. Suddenly it became clear that the questions of the 1970s were not new after all. Adventists that were deeply threatened by the fresh data organized battalions to deny or reduce the reality of the evidence; on the other extreme, militant forces marshalled to deny the integrity of Ellen White. Extremes positions developed on both sides of the unholy conflict: truth was the first casualty.[13]

III. The *Real* or the *Historical* Ellen White

For decades prior to the 1970s, very few Adventists had effective knowledge of letters and manuscripts in which Ellen White detailed her authorial methods: her reliance upon the literary assistance of her husband and others, her use of reference materials, and a host of related matters. She was "inexpressibly sad" when James was too ill to help prepare her writings for the printer. "I am not a scholar," she lamented. "I cannot prepare my own writings for the press. Until I can do this I shall write no more. It is not my duty to tax others with my manuscript" (Manuscript 3, 1873, 5). When Ellen White placed copy in the hands of one senior minister, she was disappointed: "He just did a miserable job. He did not change anything or improve it at all." By contrast, she declared, "I prize Mary [Clough, a secretary] more and more every day" (Letter 59, 1876, 1-3). Ellen White requested her associates to send or secure reference materials: "Send books, red-covered Jewish Antiquities and the Bible Dictionary. Is Night Scenes of the Bible there? If so, send it" (Letter 60, 1878, 1). "Tell Mary to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events" in Christ's life (Letter 38, 1885, 8). Ellen White states that she spent three thousand dollars just to employ "workers" to prepare her main "Life of Christ" volume for publication (Letter 114, 1896, 3).[14]

Of many secretaries that Ellen White employed to prepare incessant periodical articles and books for publication, Marian Davis towers above the others. For a quarter-century Miss Davis was a trusted friend and the only employee Ellen White dignified with the unofficial title of "my bookmaker." Perhaps the writing of Ellen White's classic on Christ's life, *The Desire of Ages,* is the clearest window through which to observe her methods as a writer. The task began in an informal way with the manuscript published as *Spiritual Gifts* in 1858; it included, from the 1870s, toil on the *Spirit of Prophecy*

Andrews University, 2007); I have reviewed this excellent work in various sources including "Lectures share research on 1919 conference," *Record,* 24 January 2009, 7, with Nathan Brown.

[13] When The Folio Society wanted me to buy *The Secret War,* a "thrilling new history set about the covert operations that won the Second World War," it tried to entice me with a 1943 quote from Winston Churchill: "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies." The ethics of the religious historian do not allow the luxury of falsehood.

[14] Robert W. Olson and Ron Graybill, "How *The Desire of Ages* was Written," (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 23 May 1979), cite this evidence and much more of a similar nature. However, Ellen White's letters and manuscripts remain rich sources for further exploration.

volumes that, in turn, culminated with the important books produced during the 1890s. Hence, the process occurred primarily in the United States but its later stages were influenced by Ellen White's experiences overseas. For instance, on the continent of Europe (1885-1887) and in England, she had access to the library of John N. Andrews and other important resources.[15] In Australia and New Zealand (1891-1900), her work was impacted by serious illness (1891-2), incessant travel, and constant distractions. For example, during much of 1893 the author was in New Zealand while her trusted "bookmaker" was on the other side of the Tasman Sea in Melbourne, Australia. Marian Davis wrote on March 29 about "the necessity of having the matter from articles and scrapbooks, that might be available for use in the life of Christ, copied, so as to be convenient for reference." Her next sentence describes the scope of the task: "Perhaps you can imagine the difficulty of trying to bring together points relating to any subject, when these must be gleaned from thirty scrapbooks, a half-dozen bound volumes, and fifty manuscripts, all covering thousands of pages." Close to the book's 1898 publication, a sudden decision was made to give it a new name–*The Desire of Ages*–to better depict its focus on Jesus Christ.

Later, in a letter written on 23 April 1900, Ellen White asks, "How are my books made?" and then describes how Davis performed one aspect of her work:

She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She always has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

The process is apparent: Ellen White is busy writing letters on a host of subjects addressed to people in different parts of the world; she is travelling constantly, speaking much, and writing books on a variety of subjects. She is also reading widely, as the Veltman team confirmed.[16] Ellen White was not a solitary author but the leader of a dedicated team who helped her to produce the writings that were accepted as prophetic; both her spiritual gift and the spiritual gifts of the community she served were crucial.[17]

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[15] Bryan W. Ball, while chair of the Religion Department at Newbold College, was assigned to research literature that may have influenced White's periodical articles during her stay in England (E-Mail, Ball to Patrick, 5 August 2009). While the task of assessing the influence of ephemeral literature is a daunting one, it merits careful exploration.

[16] Note the recent publication, by E. Marcella Anderson King and Kevin L. Morgan, *More Than Words: A Study of Inspiration and Ellen White's Use of Sources in* The Desire of Ages (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Honor Him Publishers, 2009), quotes Veltman on p. 172: "With the aid of her literary assistants, she built out of the common quarry of stone not a replica of another's work but rather a customized literary composition that reflects the particular faith and Christian hope that she was called to share." The sentence cited is from Fred Veltman, *Ministry*, December 1990, 15.

[17] The evidence illustrates how the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts operated; Ellen White's charisma interacted with the spiritual giftedness of the community she served. The community shaped and interpreted the message in a process that depicts Adventism's present responsibility.

Her significant associates were James White, Willie White, General Conference presidents, authority figures like W.W. Prescott and, most importantly in the climactic years, Marian Davis.[18] Pervasive throughout her life as an author was the Adventism (authors and people) with which she sustained a close relationship. Most specifically, Miss Davis had charge of a wealth of written materials in scrapbooks; these she must comb through, select from, and organize. Davis attended lectures on related subjects so she could make suggestions to her employer. Staff found books to assist Ellen White: like the harmony of the gospels that helped her structure Christ's life chronologically. Consultants were valued in the preparation of the text of *The Desire of Ages*, as they would be in revising *The Great Controversy* for its 1911 edition, and in the process of sorting out details of biblical history for the last volume of the *Conflict* series, *Prophets and Kings* (1917). Miss Davis and other secretaries typed and retyped manuscripts as they were readied for publication. Negotiations from Australia with Pacific Press in the United States were slow, given the mail system at the time. The publisher's responsibilities may have included matters as important as the transposition of chapters, in the case of *The Desire of Ages*. Ellen White read all the copy to ensure the final product was in accord with her understanding.

Although these remarks about Ellen White's authorial methods are brief (the extant material merits at least a book-length treatment), they indicate that the actual, historical Ellen White was succinctly described in the 1919 conversations amongst administrators, Bible, and history teachers. That evidence illustrated a healthy relationship between Ellen White's spiritual gift and the spiritual gifts of her faith-community, a relationship that was severely distorted during the following half-century. What reliable leaders said in 1919 was attacked in a pamphlet war at the time; it is labelled as apostasy by some of those who claim to be the most faithful followers of Ellen White.[19]

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[18] The difficult experience of another literary assistant, Fannie Bolton, illustrates the undoing of Ellen White's intended role for such employees. See "The Fannie Bolton Story: A Collection of Documents" (Washington, D.C.: White Estate, April 1982). Cf. the contents of DF 82, DF 389, DF 445.

[19] Russell R. and Colin D. Standish have, since the 1970s, produced more than fifty books, many of them consistent in attitude and content with *The Greatest Of All the Prophets* (Narbethong, Victoria: Highwood, 2004), and *Half a Century of Apostasy: The New Theology's Grim Harvest, 1956-2006* (Narbethong, Victoria: Highwood, 2006). The second of these volumes (p. 488) summarizes the first as "A defense of the inerrancy of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy." *Greatest* states, "That infamous Bible Conference, in which high Church administrators expressed doubts concerning aspects of the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy, has become a crucial historical event for those who wish to ignore specific Spirit of Prophecy counsels" (237). *Greatest* describes the 1919 Bible Conference as "a disgrace to our Church" (162), locates Lacey and Daniells "in serious error" (163); states that Daniells "expressed doubts" (168); "at times used extreme examples to diminish the health message" (183); "diminished the *Testimonies"* (183); "disparaged" *Sketches from the Life of Paul* (183); "with subtle questions … pursued his doubts" (185); used "words disparaging the work of Sister White" (185). For the Standish brothers, Daniells' comments "resonate doubt down to the present day" (187). Further, "The 1919 Bible Conference stands as a most significant event in the history of the gathering apostasy within our church" (186). Any serious student of Adventist Studies needs to be aware of how to evaluate centrist studies and those produced by independent presses on the right and left of the mainstream.

IV. The *Unreal* Ellen White, from the Golden Age of Adventist Apologetics

All the historical perceptions outlined above were well known amongst Ellen White's close associates, many of whose views are recorded at length in the church's archives. Such data underline the reality of a long-standing tension about the Adventist understanding of Ellen White as author. The "Sister White" of most Adventists at the beginning of the final third of the twentieth century is still (2009) the revered prophet of a large percentage of believers who have either not encountered or ignored the abundant evidence that has surfaced since 1970. That Ellen White is *ahistorical*; a person presumed to offer an absolutely constant voice in a fast-changing world; a woman largely uninfluenced by the wider culture of her time and even (mostly) uninfluenced by her Adventist contemporaries; an author giving the definitive word on biblical history, biblical chronology, aspects of Christian history, and even some of its secular counterparts, like the French Revolution; a writer offering Adventists the only fully reliable harmony of the four gospels and the true history of the crust of the earth, including the source of volcanoes. Her health writings, unlike those of all other health reformers, were claimed to be a century ahead of their time, and needing no revision. She used very few literary sources; what sources she did use were assumed to be selected under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and thus were seen as being as authoritative as the visions that she recorded–frequently spiced with "I saw" statements.[20] The literary beauty of her writings was presented as another compelling evidence that she received direct, Divine inspiration. Her theology was claimed to be without a flaw, despite the fact that growth and change characterized the religious movement with which she was intimately connected. In a word, Ellen White's writings were what the Standish brothers identify as "inerrant": a claim that is foundational for more than twenty of their books that focus of what they describe as the "the ills of God's church."[21]

Such believers emphasize principally the supernatural elements in Ellen White's experience: the miraculous woman who held up an 18-pound Bible for half-an-hour in an outstretched hand, received two thousand visions, ceased breathing even for hours while

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[20] Ronald D. Graybill, "Did Mrs. White 'Borrow' in Reporting a Vision?" and "The 'I Saw' Parallels in Ellen White's Writings," *Adventist Review*, 2 April 1981, 7; 29 July 1982, 3, 4-6.

[21] Contrast Raymond F. Cottrell, "Historical Conditioning in the Bible and the Writings of Ellen G. White," 1971, available in DF683-c-1, Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre, Avondale College. See "Ellen G. White Statements Relating to Geology and Earth Sciences" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1982); *Medical Science and the Spirit of Prophecy* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1971), 3-4, and many like sources. Such materials form a backdrop for the lively discussion between Don McMahon and T. Joe Willey. I thank both McMahon and Willey for sharing many e-mails that have kept me aware of McMahon's determination to highlight the continuing value of Ellen White's health counsels (as in his comparison between her lifestyle recommendations and those of the World Health Organization) and Willey's penchant for the conventional use of scientific methodology, logic, and statistics—with data collected under double-blind and controlled conditions. Cf. T. Joe Willey, "Natural or Supernatural: Can science establish the supernatural in the health writings of Ellen G. White?" *Adventist Today*, September-October, 2008, 20-22; Don McMahon, "The Nature of Inspiration in the Health Writings of Ellen White," *Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium* 4 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, 2008), 5-37.

receiving a vision, predicted future events with flawless accuracy, and more. Other believers define their prophet with quite different emphases: as the creative influence behind a struggling movement seeking from Scripture "the truth as it is in Jesus" (her cherished term), seeing God as the author of both the Bible and science; able to grow in understanding, as well as embrace and authorize constructive change; fostering a movement that could negotiate accreditation for its educational institutions, recommend principles of fiscal accountability, and adopt scientific medicine in its health-care facilities. On another wing of the effervescent debate are those that declare Ellen White is a conniving and consummate fraud.

During its short history, Adventism has engaged at length with a number of important aspects of Christian thought, such as eschatology, Christology, soteriology, and cosmology. The great questions of the nineteenth century, pressed upon Adventism by its religious culture, were along the lines of *What does it mean to be Adventist?* and *What does it mean to be Christian?* Many of the questions of the twentieth century were of a different nature: *How does evidence shape faith?* and *How do sacred writings offer meaning?* The living voice and written views of Ellen White helped define Adventist identity and mission between 1844 and 1887, and drew it closer to mainstream Christianity in 1888 and thereafter. As Modernism began to trouble Adventism early in the twentieth century, Ellen White's living voice was silenced and the historical understanding of her writings was wrapped up with the transcripts of the 1919 conversations, and almost forgotten for fifty years. By 1970, a surprised Adventism began to realize it must deal simultaneously with questions about evidence and meaning. It took twelve years to unkindly dump most of the substantive data about Ellen White's life and writings on to the corporate Adventist desk,[22] so that a comprehensive reassessment might be possible. Already, by then, the church had polarised and many of its brightest minds were psychologically or physically estranged from their religious community. Since then, some Adventists have increasingly reverted to their historic tradition about Ellen White, without giving serious attention to the abundant evidence.[23] Others, especially new converts, are quite unaware of the data. Yet others have been alienated from their faith and their religious community; they feel the chasm between history and faith is too wide to bridge. However, a significant number have set about to transform Adventist tradition in the light of Scripture, respecting an Ellen White who assures them that truth will lose nothing from close investigation.[24]

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[22] The finest review of this process is that by Donald McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration; Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* 10:4 (March 1980), 27-41.

[23] To assess the stance of Joe Crews and his colleagues (for instance, see the pamphlet by Steve Gifford, "She speaks for GOD…" [Baltimore, MD: Amazing Facts, n.d.]), is to understand why Crews assessed my article, "Does our past embarrass us? "*Ministry,* April 1991, 7-10, as "dangerous and deceptive," in a letter to the editor of *Ministry,* August 1991, 2. A similar observation is applicable to the insights of the Standish brothers who rated the attempts I made with the *Record* editor during 2004, to update the church regarding Ellen White, as among the most "disingenuous" material ever to blight a Seventh-day Adventist publication; see *Greatest,* 49.

[24] Systematic theologian Fritz Guy developed an impressive assemblage of Ellen White quotes that he alludes to in "Change, Scripture and Science: Good News for Adventist Thinking in the Twenty-first

The continued valuing of Ellen White's writings appears to be unthinkable for many of those in the rejectionist camp; a few such individuals have demonstrated their concern by burning or selling their Ellen White books. Continued valuing of Ellen White's writings remains important for the transformationists; their inquiring minds demand access to every page so that the complete picture may be faithfully drawn.[25] Continued valuing of Ellen White's writings is a matter of personal and cosmic destiny for the reversionists. Obviously, an extensive re-parenting process is necessary if Adventist attitudes toward their mother are to be informed by historical reality.

V. Ellen White's Writings and the Internet

The advent of the Information Age has changed the landscape of Ellen White Studies within the lifetimes of persons now engaged in the process, raising new problems and offering exciting opportunities. As a student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (1970-1972), I used the room-sized computer at Andrews University to analyze statistical data for a Master of Divinity thesis. During the next decade, as the registrar of Avondale College requiring all tertiary students to complete the subject *Computer Literacy*, I decided it was necessary to take the subject myself—meaning my second doctorate was completed (1992) with the help of an Apple 2e and the Avondale College computer system. Now (2009) the computer in my study facilitates access to primary sources relating to Adventist Studies that were unknown four decades ago and unreachable even twenty years ago—except by very expensive travel to multiple locations in the Northern Hemisphere.

The basic problem for researchers—adequate access to primary sources—is now largely solved. For a mere US$45, Adventist Book Centers sell a *Comprehensive Research Edition* CD-ROM as well as an inventory of the latest *Complete Published Writings* CD, and *Legacy of Light.* These three CDs make available 385 Ellen G. White titles (over 75,000 pages), the four-volume *Comprehensive Index,* 110 topical papers (such as "How *The Desire of Ages* Was Written," mentioned above), and a wealth of other research materials. Forthcoming are three works: an encyclopedia about the life and writings of Ellen White, a volume about the people to whom she wrote letters, and a volume that will

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Century," *Spectrum* 37:1 (Summer 2009), 50-55. I thank Guy for his conversations with me regarding such matters, including his e-mails from 20 January 2009 to 28 August 2009.

[25] My definition and advocacy of a transformationist stance is illustrated by papers available since 1998 on sdanet.org/atissue and elsewhere. See, for instance, "Re-Visioning the Role of Ellen White for Seventh-day Adventists Beyond 2000" (1997); "Ellen White Yesterday and Today: Understanding and Affirming the Ministry of the Most Creative Seventh-day Adventist" (2002); "Learning from Ellen White's Perception and Use of Scripture: Toward an Adventist Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century" (2003); "Ellen White and South Pacific Adventism: Retrospect and Prospect" (2004); "The *Questions on Doctrine* Event: Contrasting Perceptions, Their Impact and Potential," a paper delivered at the *Questions on Doctrine* 50th Anniversary Conference, Andrews University, 25 October 2007; published on www.sdanet.org/atissue and on www.qod.andrews.edu.

leave little unsaid from an historical perspective. In addition, extensive resource materials are available without cost via the Internet. Since 1970, the discipline of Ellen White Studies has experienced a process of democratization as the relevant data becomes more readily available.

During 1979, the South Pacific Division officers assigned me to write an article about the way freshly-available data intersected with the Adventist understanding of Ellen White's life and writings, thereby thrusting me into a process in which I am still engaged thirty years later. I have tried in scores of pieces of writing (articles, papers, book chapters, a book, a Master of Literature thesis and a PhD dissertation) to tell the truth about Ellen White's life and writings in the light of all the evidence available to me. Since 1998, sdanet.org/atissue and other entities have placed selected conference papers and articles on their websites, sometimes with helpful links to the resources that are mentioned in the text or footnotes. I am deeply grateful for the variety of input that has come to me from Australasia, North America, Europe, Russia, Asia, and Africa. Some of my articles are also accessible via the SDA Periodical Index; some pieces are now so readily accessible on various Internet sites that, at times, it is quicker for me to access them on my computer screen rather than walk three paces to retrieve the "hard' copy from a filing cabinet.

Numerous search engines facilitate access to reliable data and ephemeral opinion about Ellen White's life and writings; in other words, the Internet is a source of both trash and treasure. Some of the things that I have written are seriously misjudged or grossly misused by persons who are located on the right and the left of the vibrant discussion that grows bigger every day. Therefore, it is highly important to trust only those websites that develop a proven track record for reliability. Sites that seek to advocate the traditional Ellen White tend to be seriously dismissive of the historical data that offers a balanced account of her life and writings, choosing only that which accords with the cherished views of the persons in charge of them. Sites that are overtly hostile toward Ellen White's life and writings tend to be dismissive of the historical data that offers a balanced account, choosing only that which accords with the polemical views of the people who operate them. Therefore, the user needs to be careful that ideas presented are not divorced from their context, distorted from the author's intention, or dismissive of crucial evidence.

VI. A Work in Progress: Mary, Ellen White and the Adventist Future

The task of bringing Christian teaching about Mary into line with known reality is not a priority item for the current Adventist agenda.[26] However, the writings of many Adventists highlight the integrity of their personal response to the data about Ellen White's life and writings, and illustrate why and how an enhanced unity is possible

[26] This paper implies no comparison between Mary and Ellen White; it simply observes two examples showing how human beings (including Christians in general, and Adventists) are apt to embroider history in ways that create serious misunderstandings and evoke needless controversies.

within the Adventist communion.[27] We should carefully evaluate the full range of constructive options that appear worthy of consideration in the present tense. The following suggestions might be evaluated within this challenging process, discarded as the evidence suggests, or selectively implemented.

1. **Intentionally engage in the task all Adventists who are willing to engage in it.** We believe in the Reformation doctrine described as "the priesthood of all believers," including the humblest member and those whose specialities relate to the matter in hand. Trans-disciplinary study is essential: how can we hope to reach consensus on Ellen White's spiritual giftedness without close attention to input from a range of disciplines, beginning with Old Testament Studies, New Testament Studies, biblical theology, Historical Studies, historical theology, systematic theology, and sociology? Aided by computer technology, an initiative such as this is now doable in ways that were impossible during any earlier era. Such a process seems to be a responsible forward step that flows naturally from the Adventist Society of Religious Studies and the Forum discussions initiated in 1997, so well reported by James Stirling.[28]

2. **Thoroughly examine the dynamic relationship between continuity and change in Adventist teaching,** with particular attention to five landmark ideas identified during the early years of Sabbatarian Adventism: Second Advent, Sabbath, Sanctuary, State-of-the-Dead, Spiritual Gifts. This study will demonstrate the importance of method in Bible study and it will note how the church has transformed these particular concepts over time. For instance, it took Adventists about a century to move from giving major attention to the seventh-day Sabbath in terms of the biblical *day* of worship, to a more effective treatment of the Sabbath in terms of both *the biblical day of worship* and *the biblical way of worship*. Each of the five doctrines mentioned will reward careful exploration in the light of such developmental processes. Insofar as the teaching about Spiritual Gifts is concerned, several matters need to be observed: the authority of Scripture compared with the authority of non-canonical prophets; the contrast between the Bible in Adventism and the Bible in other nineteenth-century faiths such as Mormonism (Joseph Smith offered new scriptures) and Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy gave her followers a "key" to the Scriptures); the historical context in which early Adventists developed their teaching about Spiritual Gifts, influenced

[27] Examples are many; note, as an example, the "Ellen White Redux" section of *Spectrum* 37:2, 19-37. The historiography of Frederick Hoyt, and the insights of theologians like David Larson and Richard Rice, offer helpful pieces for the Adventist jig-saw.

[28] "Re-Visioning the Role of Ellen White Beyond the Year 2000," *Adventist Today* 6:2 (March-April 1998), 19-21. Adventists need to read carefully such works as Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), and recent studies of intertextuality in the New Testament, like Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, editors, *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2009).

as it was by Millerism, Methodism, and American religious culture within the city of Portland, the State of Maine, and beyond.[29]

3. **Carefully locate Ellen White's writings within the historical and sociological contexts of her seventy-year public ministry.** Such initiatives must take account of the North American, European and South Pacific cultures that she related to, and the development of the Seventh-day Adventist community with which she had a symbiotic relationship. This process should also note the changes that occurred within Adventism, including those during the early years of the twentieth century as Modernism and Fundamentalism began to eye each other malevolently.[30]

4. **Cogently ask how evidence should be applied to the formation of faith.** One of many potential examples may illustrate the usefulness of such endeavours. Ellen White was a convinced creationist, and her writings offer constructive initiatives toward the development from Scripture of an Adventist theology of creation.[31] However, many Adventists have been diverted from that essential task to spend their energies in debate about such matters as time.[32] It is a fact that on

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[29] Cf. "Continuity and Change in Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine and Practice," a lecture delivered at the San Diego Chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums, 12 July 2003. Sound recordings of Forum presentations since 1980 are available on cassettes or CDs from the San Diego Forum, P.O. Box 3148, La Mesa, CA 91944-3148, USA, or ak-jk@cox.net; the text of the lecture may be consulted on sdanet.org/atissue. The finest analysis of its type is that by Rolf Pöhler, whose 1995 Andrews University doctoral dissertation has developed into articles and books, including *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching: A Case Study in Doctrinal Development* (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 2001); for a brief review of Pöhler's dissertation, see my article, "Doctrinal development studied," *Record*, 15 March 2003, 10.

[30] I explore some of the related needs and potential in "Religious History in Century 21: Reflections on the Demand for Credible Historiography," a paper presented at the "New Perspectives on Christianity Conference," Avondale College, 16 January 2009. However, the conference slated for Portland, Maine (USA) during October 2009 has the potential to create a book that will enhance the historical appreciation of Ellen White's life and writings. In the interim we should remain alert to the significance of doctoral studies that are frequently being completed; the article "Contextualizing Recent Tensions" describes more than twenty studies, such as Richard B. Ferret, *Charisma and Routinisation in a Millennialist Community: Seventh-day Adventist Identity* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008). Slowly the church appears to better understand the behaviors that proved so destructive during the 1980s; for a brief account, see my article, "Glacier View and the Australasian Ministers," *Spectrum* 34: 2 (Spring 2006), 68-71.

[31] As a systematic theologian, James P. Mackey observes that people leave religion behind for a variety of reasons, "some with a sense of loss or betrayal, others with a more positive intent" (xi). See "The Case for a Full-blown Christian Theology of Creation," in his book *Christianity and Creation: The Essence of the Christian Faith and Its Future Among Religions* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 21-26. On page 22 Mackey calls for "a Christian theology constructed entirely and in all its constituent parts—Creation, Fall, Salvation in Christ, Trinity, Eschatology, Revelation, Faith, Grace—as a theology of creation." Another perspective is suggested by Ilia Delio, *Christ in Evolution* (Marynoll, New York: Orbis, 2008).

[32] The biblical integrity of the task is well expressed in the extensive writings of Old Testament exegete Laurence Turner; its inter-disciplinary dimensions are evident within the slim volume edited by Brian Bull, Fritz Guy and Ervin Taylor, *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives* (Riverside,

numerous occasions Ellen White suggests that the earth is about six thousand years old.[33] Therefore, her readers need to be aware that as a nineteenth-century Christian she believed that she "knew" the age of the earth because of the dates appended in the margins of many Bibles of the time; nowhere does she imply that God revealed this concept to her. A doctoral study by Colin House completed at Andrews University demonstrates clearly that it is illegitimate to use biblical chronologies to compute the age of the earth, using the methods employed by an Irish cleric, Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656), in his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti.* Ussher's book, written 1650-54, propounded (according to *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*) "a long-accepted chronology of Scripture which fixed the Creation precisely at 4004 BC." Seventh-day Adventists should not be constrained by Ussher's limited knowledge; what we need to do is match his diligence in Bible study as we faithfully use interpretive tools unavailable to him but freely available to us.[34] Ellen White recognised God as the author of both the Bible and science; we need to be faithful to this idea as we develop and cherish a doctrine of creation that embraces the perspectives of Genesis and evidence about time derived from ice-cores, archeology, radiometric dating, paleontology, and a host of other modes of scientific enquiry.

5. **Maturely explore how the "mother" of Adventism expected her "children" to develop an adult-adult appreciation of her spiritual giftedness.** Adventists have long debated whether Ellen White's health writings give us scientific data a hundred years ahead of her time, or whether her contribution is in alerting us to the connection between wellness, faith, and mission. Similarly, some have long contended that her writings give us an educational "blueprint," whereas others see them as offering principles and emphasizing values—the role of the Bible in education and how to develop educated thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others' thoughts. If Ellen White's role is as a lesser light to lead us to the greater light of the Bible, we have a daunting exegetical task before us that does not admit of the control Ellen White was given over the *Commentary Reference Series* during the 1950s. Alden Thompson has helped us realize the Bible is not a codebook but a casebook, an idea that when applied to Ellen White's literary corpus offers a promising frame of reference for Adventist life and mission in the new millennium.

Calif.: Adventist Today Foundation, 2006). While thinking about a sustainable theology of creation, I value recent conversations with a variety of scientists who have sought to understand their particular scientific specialities and Scripture (especially Eric Magnusson, Kevin de Berg, Lynden Rogers, and Cornelis Bootsman). The task of biblical exegesis is a demanding one, a fact illustrated by the writings of such scholars as R.E. Friedman, Jacob Milgrom, and Roy Gane, as well as comparable New Testament exegetes. Note the content of Shawna Dolansky, editor, *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R.E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2008).

[33] "Ellen G. White Statements Relating to Geology and Earth Sciences" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1982), 63 pages.

[34] Cf. the advice of Stephen J. Gould, "Fall of the House of Ussher," *Natural History* 100 (November 1991), 12-21.

Any effective discussion of these five concepts will alert us to a plethora of related matters that need attention from those who wish to make a constructive application of Ellen White's voluminous writings. Such a discussion may enable us to get to first base in an effective re-parenting process.[35]

VII. Reading Ellen White's Writings in Century 21

In *Jesus Through the Centuries, His Place in the History of Culture,* Jaroslav Pelikan observed that "the way a particular age has depicted Jesus is often a key to the genius of that age." Pelikan identifies and describes eighteen images of the Founder of Christianity that flourished between the first and the twentieth centuries. While Christian authors evoke less interpretive complexity, towering figures like Augustine, Luther, and Wesley have been portrayed with the help of multiple designations. As Graeme Bradford has well observed, Ellen White needs several descriptors to adequately portray her contribution to Adventism.

In the context of its Bible Conference of 1919, Adventism was invited to choose between two Ellen Whites, one imagined by earnest believers and the other personally known to such leaders as Daniells, Prescott, and Lacey. Located as they were between the warring camps of Modernism and Fundamentalism, the Adventists chose to shelve evidence, seek shelter amongst the Fundamentalists, and accord pervasive authority to the mother who had nurtured them from infancy to early maturity. When, especially from 1970 onward, Adventists began to examine the Scriptures and their charismatic co-founder in the light of newly-available data, they were startled to discover they must revise some of their assumptions about all inspired writings and, in particular, the roles they had come to expect their mother to fulfil. Since then, a significant number of adherents have lost all appreciation and confidence in their mother as several quite different Ellen Whites have competed for attention.

One of these is the traditional Ellen White whose portrait was painted during the golden age of Adventist apologetics. Her writings are the inclusive encyclopedia, the definitive manual of Adventist faith and practice; her prophetic authority is absolute and is to be defended at all costs against unwelcome "critics" within and without. Another is the historical Ellen White who needs no defence: her prophetic witness and multi-faceted roles are to be understood in the light of all the biblical, historical, theological, sociological, and other extant evidence. Yet another is the cultural Ellen White; a nineteenth-century religious founder whose writings have little relevance in the twenty-first century except as they offer meaning to the individual, post-modernist reader. A further Ellen White is a charlatan, untrustworthy, and reprehensible.

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[35] Gilbert Valentine (E-mails, Valentine to Patrick, 21 September 2009) suggests a number of descriptors for Ellen White's role in Adventism merit detailed exploration, such as referee, arbitrator, and mother. While it is important to discover what the church's mother was really like—the real person—Valentine suggests other implications of the parent metaphor be assessed. Both people and institutions grow toward independence; "mothers do their job of birthing and training and then have to let their offspring grow and become individuals in their own right. Continued 'mothering' of the adult as if the adult was still a child is unhealthy."

Since 1970, research relating to the life and writings of Ellen White has been increasingly democratised. Especially in Western cultures where Jonathan Butler's insight is most applicable, many young Adventists are being raised "at the knee of a different Ellen White"[36] or, more precisely, at the knee of one of several quite different Ellen Whites—or devoid of any effective knowledge about Ellen White.[37] Even so, if Ronald Numbers is to be believed, in less than forty years, historical study of Ellen White has "elevated her from a virtually unknown actor to a minor star on the stage of American religious history."[38] The Maine (USA) 2009 conference that will focus on Ellen White's life and writings is likely to further clarify how the lines of a nineteenth-century American prophet might be understood on a world stage in the twenty-first-century. The conference outcomes need to feed into an active conversation with historians, biblical scholars, theologians, pastors, sociologists, and others able to assist in the comprehensive re-parenting process that is necessary within the Adventist community. Any such initiative can only proceed effectively with intelligent consent and active participation from those who are likely to reap benefit from its outcomes.

Conclusion

For forty years, Adventism has been caught in a "turbulent historical current"[39] fed by Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Post-Modernism. Adventism's perils and opportunities are similar to those of other branches of the Christian faith, yet they are made complex by reason of the community's need to better understand the spiritual giftedness of one of its cofounders.

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[36] Jonathan M. Butler, "Reviews: Prophet or Plagiarist: A False Dichotomy?" *Spectrum* 12:4 (June 1982), 48.

[37] Colin MacLaurin (E-mails, MacLaurin to Patrick, 31 July 2009, 2 September 2009) underlines the importance of exploring the current perceptions of youth in the light of the "massive generational differences" that are apparent in Adventism. A minority of youth probably fit within the polar opposite "reversionist" and "alienationist" categories. However, in MacLaurin's view, Ellen White is neither a major issue nor even a topic of extensive discussion amongst youth at present. He continues: "Amongst the youth from large, contemporary churches in Australia, a minor scepticism prevails toward Ellen White. These youth are not closed off to her; indeed, some are very interested in and willing to accept a flawed yet inspired prophet. The majority know little of her biography and have read very little of her writings. While there is a strong and common perception that she has been over-used in the past, a minority are concerned about the dearth of knowledge about Ellen White, reflecting an 'I'd like to read more of her' attitude. In short, youth are less 'for' and 'against' Ellen White; instead, she is less of an issue amongst them."

[38] "Preface to the Third Edition," *Prophetess of Health,* xi.

[39] The three quoted words are from Martin Flanagan's review of two books about George Augustus Robinson, "Controversial player in the great colonial drama," *The Sydney Morning Herald: Spectrum,* 15-16 August 2009, 26-27. Flanagan suggests that Robinson, official protector of Tasmanian Aborigines, 1829-1834, "is destined to stand forever in this endlessly turbulent historical current." The turbulence within Adventism is apparent from responses to a quite constructive blog by Roger Thompson: see http://www.spectrummagazine.org/collegiate/2008/03/30/ellen_white_paragon_adventism. Another site that strives for balance is http://www.sdaforme.com, featuring the writings of Martin Weber.

What if questions are seldom a focus amongst historians, but they can be useful if they are asked judiciously. Seventh-day Adventism would be different if any one of its three co-founders had not made the contributions attributed to them. In particular, if Ellen White had not been able to meet the needs of the fledgling movement in its formative years, would the disappointed Millerites have been able to coalesce and keep their Advent faith alive? Would the early maturity of Adventism have reached viable consensus on its landmarks, and developed appreciation for the benefits of organization, health reform, and Christian education? Would Adventism of the 1880s have been able to more fully embrace Righteousness by Faith, thereby refining its Christology and soteriology to better fulfil the escalating demands of its mission? Would the movement have survived the enormous pressures that it encountered during the early decades of the twentieth century? Questions such as these lead to an appreciation of the debt Adventism owes to its mother for facilitating its survival, legitimating change, and forwarding mission.

For fifty-five years after the death of Ellen White, Adventism was able to largely avoid the substantive question of how evidence should be used to shape the perception and expression of faith. Now that thousands of information cards are known to be on Adventism's corporate desk, integrity demands that they be sorted honestly and intelligently. The present situation calls for reversionists to relate to their mother on an adult-adult basis in view of the abundant evidence that is now available to everyone; it invites rejectionists to remember that during the early decades of the movement, its survival may not have been possible without the ministrations of Ellen White as its mother. Both of these dimensions of understanding must be kept before the transformationists[40] if they, together with those on their right and their left, are to be successful in the demanding task of re-parenting Adventism for more united and effective fellowship and mission.[41]

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[40] I thank David Brock (E-mail, Brock to Patrick, 10 August 2009) for sharing his concepts of what transformationists should expect as Ellen White books are distributed: correction of historical inaccuracies in such works as *The Great Controversy;* credit (perhaps in the prefaces of various books) to those who were part of the collaborative team that produced a particular volume; footnotes recognizing the literary sources from which material was derived. As I reflected on Brock's suggestions, the published form of my article about *The Desire of Ages* came to hand in the August 2009 issues of the North American and Australasian *Signs of the Times;* it would seem useful to ask whether this kind of presentation is adequate for the general reader.

[41] Yaroslav Paliy (E-mail, Paliy to Patrick 23 August 2009) deftly warns against the use of Mother White's "image and interpretation" to secure election to a coveted post. Paliy also suggests the need for "family gatherings to explore our fascinations and dissatisfactions, our fond memories and nightmares" in ways that emphasize the importance of our love for each other. Adventist unity and mission would be enhanced by applying the message of two recent publications: Alden Thompson, *Beyond Common Ground: Why liberals and conservatives need each other* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2009); A. Leroy Moore, *Adventist Cultures in Conflict: Principles of Reconciliation* (N.p.: Moore Publishing, 2009). The difficulties inherent in this process are widely discussed on various Internet sites, including spectrummagazine.org and atoday.org. Ervin Taylor, "Neo-Apocalyptic Adventism: Vision or Nightmare?" calls for envisioning "a broad spectrum of 'Adventisms' at peace with each other, or, at least, agreeing to disagree without exchanging invectives," *Adventist Today* 17:3 (Summer 2009), 29.

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