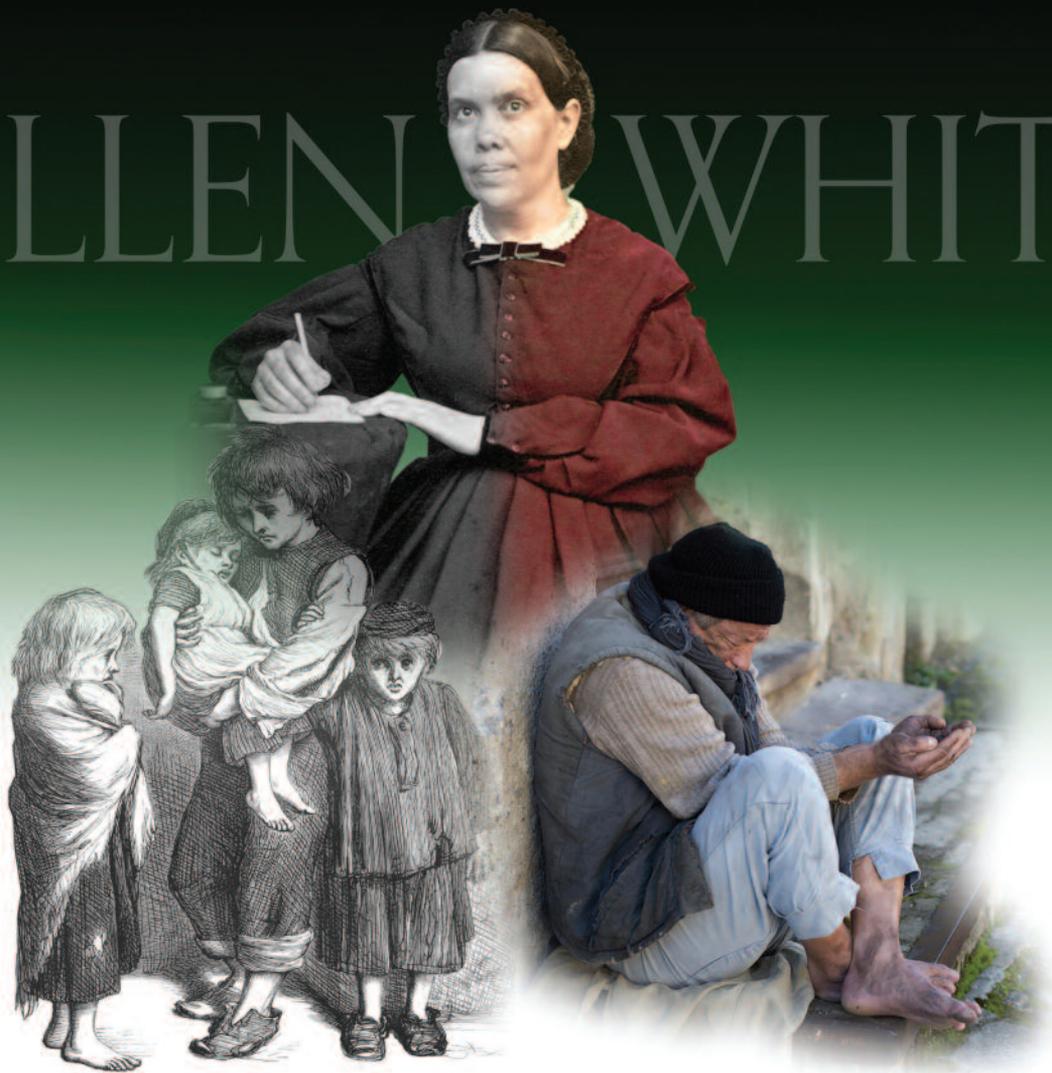


ELLEN WHITE



as a Prophetic Voice for the Poor and the Oppressed

Ellen G. White's spiritual experiences and testimonies have contributed to the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its very beginning.¹ At a time when it seemed that prophecy had failed and that William Miller's message of Christ's soon return was a false hope that had produced only disappointment and chaos, the testimony of young Ellen Harmon (later White) captured the hearts and minds of a handful of believers who still clung to their faith in the movement. Her first vision of Jesus leading

the Advent people as they pressed upward toward the New Jerusalem provided the disappointed ones with encouragement to continue their journey.² Her visions were regarded as evidence that God was with the tiny remnant of the Millerites, and that they were living in the promised end times when "sons and daughters shall prophesy."³ Ellen White played an important role in the nascent movement as she relayed God's messages to the Sabbatarian Adventists. Her messages sustained their hope in the soon coming of Jesus, encouraged their trust in God, and emphasized the application of scriptural

principles to every aspect of daily life.

Adventist pastors, teachers, church scholars, and administrators have a well-established history of emphasizing Ellen White's spiritual gifts and their contributions to the church. Her messages are often referred to as "the Spirit of Prophecy." Despite the fact that she preferred the term "messenger" over the title "prophet,"⁴ church members and leaders have understood her role to be that of a prophet.⁵

The story of Ellen White's prophetic ministry is often related in terms of visions that strengthened Adventist com-

BY GINGER HANKS HARWOOD

mitment to specific doctrines (such as the Sabbath and the sanctuary) and messages that led to the creation of health-care, educational, and publishing ministries that became central to Adventist identity and mission. Occasionally, church pastors and leaders stress her trance-like physical state during visions or specific instances in which she “saw” events that were yet to transpire. These are intended to increase confidence in her visions as real events and to provide evidence of her prophetic gift.

While both apologists and detractors have wrestled with issues concerning the authenticity and source of Ellen White’s experiences, her originality, inspiration, and fallibility, as well as the process through which her published items were produced,⁶ focusing on these issues can serve to detract from more pressing questions. The church’s current discussions need to scrutinize Ellen White’s works to ascertain whether her contributions (spiritual leadership, visions and dreams, writings, testimonies, and letters) position her as a “community prophet” in the biblical sense of that term, or primarily as an individual with premonitions of looming disaster for individuals and the world at large. The question, “What does it mean to be a prophet?” needs to be answered with a closer and more serious regard for the Bible’s own testimony. What role did biblical prophets play in their communities, according to the evidence we can draw from Scripture? Did Ellen White also engage in the tasks central to the role of the biblical prophets? And perhaps most crucially, how are those tasks related to the way Ellen White is interpreted and perpetuated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

The Biblical Role of the Prophet

Luke presents Jesus’ Nazareth sermon as the key to His own understanding of the Messiah’s calling and teachings (Luke 4:14-30). In this sermon,

Jesus read the words of Isaiah 61:1, 2 to the approving worshippers, describing God’s favor and intervention for the poor and oppressed, and declaring those words as being fulfilled in their midst through His ministry. Luke chronicles the change in the group’s reaction as Jesus’ teaching emphasizes the inclusive nature of God’s love and intervention. Jesus stood in their midst as a prophet, speaking God’s words and proclaiming the good news: The God of all people is actively working for the healing and restoration of humanity. Enraged at His depiction of the history

Luke records Jesus’ response to the unspoken question: “When the messengers of John had departed, He [Jesus] began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously apparelled and live in luxury are in kings’ courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet?’” (Luke 7:24-27, NKJV).⁷ Jesus challenged the crowds with His answer: “A prophet.” Jesus’ hearers, knowing the history of Israel’s prophets,

understood His meaning: Prophets frequently affront the sensitivities of the powerful as they declare the necessity of dealing justly and compassionately in all transactions and with all people, and they regularly suffered because of it.⁸

John, and ultimately Jesus, would follow in the tradition of their predecessors. Their calls for right relationships (justice and compassion) disturbed the status quo and so were silenced by the powerful. Rosemary Radford Reuther comments on the inherent tension created when a prophet calls for justice and righteousness. She notes: “Prophetic faith . . . sets

God in tension with the ruling class by having God speak through the prophet(ess) as the advocate of the poor and the oppressed.”⁹ Theologian Neil Reimer describes the prophet as “a person who speaks God’s word and passes judgment on those who respect or violate God’s word.”¹⁰

Reimer further points out that prophets manifest certain core commitments that mark them as prophets. First, prophets stress allegiance to key values such as love, justice, freedom, peace, well-being, and moral excellence for all. Second, they provide critiques of existing societies based on fulfillment or nonfulfillment of those key values. Third, prophets demonstrate “a strong commitment to action . . . to

Jesus expected that John, a prophet, would understand His message: God was present, healing the sick, strengthening the weak and downhearted, opening the eyes of the blind, and working on behalf of the poor. Jesus was the incarnate manifestation of God with us.

of God’s grace towards Israel’s enemies, the congregation conspired to throw Him off a local cliff.

After the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus demonstrated His Nazareth claims through His acts of healing among the poor. When the imprisoned John sent his disciples to ask Jesus whether He was the Messiah, Jesus sent them back with the report that the sick were being healed and the good news was being preached to the poor. Jesus expected that John, a prophet, would understand His message: God was present, healing the sick, strengthening the weak and downhearted, opening the eyes of the blind, and working on behalf of the poor. Jesus was the incarnate manifestation of God with us.

fulfill those values, to honor the commandments, and to narrow the gap between prophetic values and existential reality.”¹¹

Reimer employs the description of biblical prophets as tests for “modern prophets” as well. Biblical prophets called a community, its leaders, and its elite into accountability concerning the nature of their transactions, particularly where the poor, the alien, and those vulnerable to oppression were concerned. They were voices for the voiceless, those people whose lack of status and position made them easy targets for oppression.

The Prophet as Visionary: Revealing God’s Vision for Community

While prophets served several functions in Israel’s history, none was more important than that of a visionary. A visionary is an individual who sees past the surface and material/cultural realities of any particular time into a spiritual dimension where another set of values and practices reign supreme. A society’s core vision provides the basis for measuring its virtue and morality.

The civil laws Moses gave Israel established the vision of *shalom*, the community at peace because its relationships were just and compassionate. The vision was embedded in Israel’s laws, structures, and covenant. Moses made it clear that Israel’s well-being depended upon following God’s plan for justice and mercy. Biblical scholars and ethicists alike have described the way in which Scripture links *shalom* (the longed-for community of peace) and the practice of justice that includes and gives special attention to the needs of the poor.¹² The prophets who followed Moses critiqued Israel’s established religious and civil power structures on the basis of their own prophetic visions or their under-

standings of the divine paradigm for social relations.

Throughout Israel’s history, the prophets reminded those in more secure economic positions that God had called them to protect the vulnerable. Prophets provided their hearers with a vision of right relationship and asserted ultimate accountability to a God who stood in the place of family to those without the protection that genetic relationships offer.¹³ The prophets announced God’s evaluation of the nation in terms of their degree of faithfulness to this righteousness.

“Prophecy is not future telling, but articulating moral truth.”¹⁴ God’s prophets often reveal more about present obligations and privileges than exact details concerning future events. They call humanity to trust in God’s revelation as the guideposts for their earthly journey, dealing justly and compassionately—however inconvenient, counter-intuitive, or risky such standards might be.

From this perspective, the prophets, even when their visions include predictive elements, are much more than future-tellers. The legitimate prophet aids the recipients of his or her messages by

supplying a vision of the righteous community. He or she can be tested by the congruence of that vision with the laws God has already given for human relationships. Further, the life and the message of the prophet need to reveal personal commitments reflecting the vision.

The identification of these components enables us to evaluate Ellen White through the lens of the moral and scriptural role of a prophet. We can ask whether she demonstrated a passion for the central values evidenced by the biblical prophets, critiqued soci-

ety in terms of these values, worked to narrow the gap between these values and the experiences of people within society, and maintained a sustained assessment of the social trajectory of her own church and society.

We can also use this lens to evaluate how Ellen White is being presented in Seventh-day Adventist churches, schools, and literature today. Do the focus and application of her prophetic vision represent a continuance of the values and missions of the biblical prophets?

Ellen White: Prophetic Vision and Mission

Ellen White offered a metavision—an over-arching view—of God’s intention for human life and the structures

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While Christians sometimes emphasize the predictive element of a prophet’s work, this may cause them to miss the prophet’s core message. God’s messengers counsel individuals and communities to walk in God’s paths so that they will move toward life rather than to spend their energy on harmful activities and projects that will eventually return to dust. History is not simply the unfolding of God’s predetermined plan: Humans have an ongoing role in shaping both the present and the future. Focus on prophecy’s predictive element may lead Christians to deny human responsibility for their community’s fate, and to behave as if their present actions have no bearing on the future.

Jim Wallis, an evangelical Christian committed to faith-filled living among the poor in Washington, D.C., wrote that

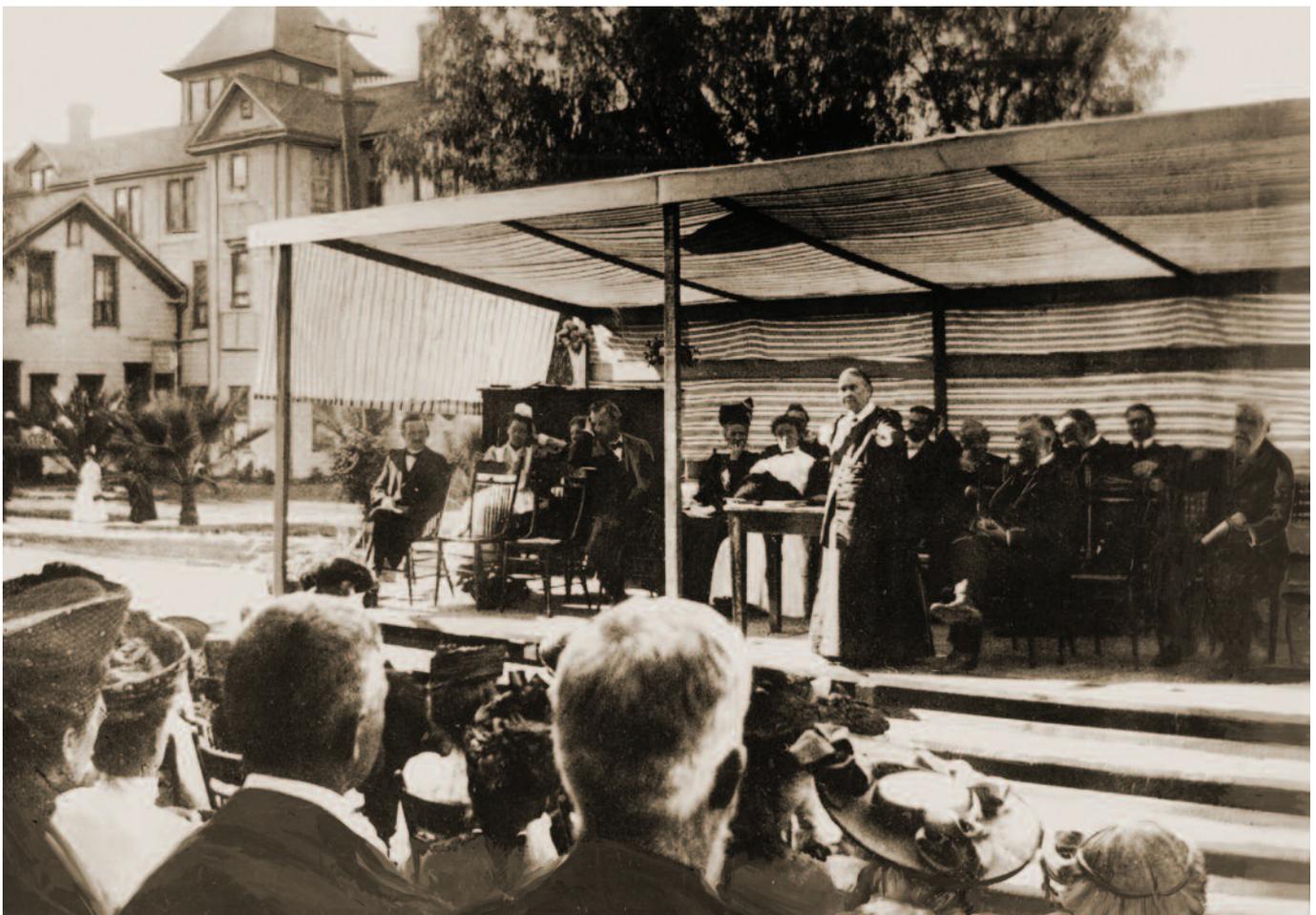
of human relationships. She was clear that humanity was created in the image of God with a divinely given purpose: the care of creation and one another. She called on Christians to relieve the suffering of distressed humanity, to extend hope, healing, and education to the poor. She saw that Christians, and Adventists in particular, were to be engaged actively in peacemaking: the ongoing process of demonstrating God's love and healing presence. She insisted that the compassionate life of Christ was to be the model for the individual believer; the laws of Moses and the admonitions of the prophets were to guide institutional and national efforts. She critiqued individuals, Christianity, and society when they failed to adhere to God's vision. She asserted boldly that the neglect of the needs of the poor commanded God's attention:

"In the great cities there are multitudes living in poverty and wretchedness, well-nigh destitute of food, shelter, and clothing; while in the same cities are those who have more than heart could wish, who live luxuriously, spending their money on richly furnished houses, on personal adornment, or worse still, upon the gratification of sensual appetites, upon liquor, tobacco, and other things that destroy the powers of the brain, unbalance the mind, and debase the soul. The cries of starving humanity are coming up before God."¹⁵

Ellen White's metavisision included the fundamental components of universal inclusivism, compassion for all, respect for human rights and dignity, and an insistence on justice in every transaction. She reaffirmed the Hebrew prophets' social vision by pointing individuals to Scripture for answers to contemporary social problems. In *The*

Ministry of Healing, dedicated to "medical missionaries," she reflected on the endeavors of those who wish to improve the state of the nation:

"How the unemployed and the homeless can be helped to secure the common blessings of God's providence and to live the life He intended man to live, is a question to which many are earnestly endeavoring to find an answer. But there are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are unable to solve the problem of poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God's word, they would find a solution of these problems that perplex them."¹⁶



Ellen White, speaking at Loma Linda, California, in 1906. She was a popular speaker on a wide range of topics ranging from charity and benevolence to prophecy and healthful living.

From the perspective of Ellen White's writings, many of the most critical social issues could be resolved through implementing Israel's laws regarding the necessity of justice and compassion. She testified to the imperative of justice in economic affairs, just as in personal relations:

"God's word sanctions no policy that will enrich one class by the oppression and suffering of another. In all our business transactions it teaches us to put ourselves in the place of those with whom we are dealing, to look not only on our own things, but also on the things of others. He who would take advantage of another's misfortunes in order to benefit himself, or who seeks to profit himself through another's weakness or incompetence, is a transgressor both of the principles and of the precepts of the word of God."¹⁷

Hebrew law was built on the understanding that every person is created to be God's steward and is obligated to manage his or her life and possessions from that perspective. All followers of God, including those of privileged inheritance, must acknowledge that the talents, abilities in skilled entrepreneurship, and money management that set them apart economically from others are gifts from God and need to be treated as such.

Ellen White also made it clear that when a society functions on the basis of a different paradigm, where personal gratification and indulgence are justified by an ethic of radical individualism, the net result is human suffering and the conviction that God is indifferent to the pain of the poor. She rebuked those who contributed to others' warped views of God by their disregard of His claims on their resources:

"God has made men His stewards, and He is not to be charged with the

sufferings, the misery, the nakedness, and the want of humanity. The Lord has made ample provision for all. He has given to thousands of men large supplies with which to alleviate the want of their fellows; but those whom God has made stewards have not stood the test, for they have failed to relieve the suffering and the needy."¹⁸

Ellen White made it clear that human misery is not God's intent. Israel's laws were God's plan to ensure Israel's future by building in safeguards to check grinding poverty and remove both the temptation and structures

earthly mission. After describing Jesus' healing activities, she noted: "Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save."¹⁹ It is important to note that Ellen White did not simply make generic statements about Christ's love that could be easily accepted without creating any internal discomfort or dissonance. She challenged the human tendency to apply the gospel commission narrowly to

those most like one's self. She cited the Good Samaritan story as the definitive standard for radical inclusivity:

"By this parable the duty of man to his fellow man is forever settled. We are to care for every case of suffering and to look upon ourselves as God's agents to relieve the needy to the very uttermost of our ability. We are to be laborers together with God. There are some who manifest great affection for their relatives, for their friends and favorites, who yet fail to be kind and considerate to those who need tender sympathy, who need kindness and love. With earnest hearts let us inquire, 'Who is my

neighbor?' Our neighbors are not merely our associates and special friends; they are not simply those who belong to our church, or who think as we do. Our neighbors are the whole human family."²⁰

In a period of American history characterized by nativism, religious triumphalism, class hatred, and racial division, she pushed her readers to reacquaint themselves with the inclusive practices of the One whom they called Lord. She stated unequivocally:

"The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common

All followers of God, including those of privileged inheritance, must acknowledge that the talents, abilities in skilled entrepreneurship, and money management that set them apart economically from others are gifts from God and need to be treated as such.

that create permanent class inequities. According to Ellen White, observable misery in the United States could be at least partially corrected if the principles governing Israel were utilized as guidelines for commerce and relations. And churches, as God's representatives on earth, must extend effort to correct the impression that true peace and prosperity are possible without just transactions, institutions, and accessible structures for recourse.

The Inclusivity of Ellen White's Vision

In the first chapter of her book *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White traced God's inclusive love to all humanity, drawing on the Luke 4:18 description of Christ's



This sculpture of the Good Samaritan represents the attitude of service at Loma Linda University and Hospital in Loma Linda, California.

brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies.”²¹

In other elaborations on this theme, she became quite specific about the universal nature of obligation to one’s neighbor. At a time when various races were labeled as inferior or sub-human even by the scientists of the period, she insisted that every individual was our “neighbor”:

“He [Jesus] showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is every one who is the property of God.”²²

Ellen White thus spoke for a God who recognized the human race as one people, and who demanded that all be included in the circle of care.

Ellen White and the Prophetic Brief

Ellen White saw speaking for justice as a part of her assignment from God. “I was instructed,” she wrote, “that I must ever urge upon those who profess to believe the truth, the necessity of practicing the truth. . . . I was charged not to neglect or pass by those who were being wronged. . . . Disagreeable though the duty may be, I am to reprove the oppressor, and plead for justice. I am to present the necessity of maintaining justice and equity in all our institutions.”²³ While her influence was greatest within Adventism, she did not limit her commentary to Adventist practices. Her remarks could be quite emphatic, as when she declared:

“The cloak of religion covers the greatest crimes and iniquity. All heaven beholds with indignation, human beings, the workmanship of God, reduced to the lowest depths of

degradation. . . . These professed Christians read of the suffering of the martyrs, and. . . wonder that men could ever possess hearts so hardened as to practice such inhuman cruelties towards their fellow-men, while at the same time they hold their fellow-man in slavery. . . . The names of such are written in blood, crossed with stripes, and flooded with agonizing, burning tears of suffering. God’s anger will not cease until He has caused the land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of His fury, and until He has rewarded unto Babylon double.”²⁴

Ellen White pronounced a similar judgment against both the nation and the churches that did not take a stand against slavery: God’s “anger burns against this nation, and especially against the religious bodies who have sanctioned and have themselves engaged in this terrible merchandise.”²⁵

When President Abraham Lincoln declared a day of prayer and fasting for the war, she responded: “Great men,

professing to have human hearts, have seen the slaves almost naked and starving, and have abused them, and sent them back to their cruel masters and hopeless bondage. . . . They have deprived them of their liberty and free air which heaven has never denied them, and then left them to suffer for food and clothing. In view of all this, a national fast is proclaimed! Oh, what an insult to Jehovah!”²⁶ Of a similar intensity was her warning to a Sabbath-keeper with proslavery sentiments: “Unless you undo what you have done, it will be the duty of God’s people to publicly withdraw their sympathy and fellowship from you.”²⁷

Ellen White also spoke out against poverty, oppression, and injustice in American society. She was a consistent advocate for the poor, and described engagement with their lives as a Christian mandate: “Christ’s followers are to learn all about the woes of the poor in their immediate vicinity and in their own country, be they white or black.”²⁸ She called the Fugitive Slave Laws crimes against God’s law: “The law of the land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey”²⁹; declared slavery as a national crime, counseled against participating in the military during the patriotic fervor of war—“I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle in their faith”³⁰; and spoke for the fair treatment of workers, and against the oppression of freed persons in the post-Reconstruction South.³¹

Ellen White also addressed American racism and the realities of continued white oppression. She boldly described the obstacles faced by any endeavor to change the situation and the underlying economic motivation of those who resisted improving the situation:

“One of the difficulties attending

the work is that many of the white people living where the colored people are numerous are not willing that special efforts should be put forth to uplift them. When they see schools established for them, when they see them being taught to be self-supporting, to follow trades, to provide themselves with comfortable homes instead of continuing to live in hovels, they see the possibility that selfish plans will be interfered with—that they will no longer be able to hire the Negro for a mere pittance: and their enmity is aroused. . . . Some act as if slavery had

of the few. While there are many more examples in each of these areas (and several others as well) that demonstrate how Ellen White functioned as a prophet during her lifetime, these are adequate to conclude this sketch of her life and work.

The Outcome of Ellen White’s Visions

Seventh-day Adventists have long embraced Ellen White’s vision of the church united with God in the mission of healing and redemption of humanity. Churches, hospitals, and educational centers stand as witnesses to the seriousness with which the members have taken her counsel, and great respect has been shown for her prophetic gift. At the same time, even those who hold her in high esteem may be unaware of the social implications of her messages. Ellen White was a voice for the poor and disenfranchised, and insisted that the Isaiah 58 mission to break the yokes of the oppressed, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and help the poor was “of the highest importance. . . . This is our work,” she wrote.³⁵

Twenty-first century Adventists need to re-examine the church’s response to the

woman they regard as God’s messenger. How is the prophetic voice of Ellen White appropriated and utilized in the modern church? How is her story presented in our schools? What does the Seventh-day Adventist Church teach (and neglect to teach) about Ellen White and her messages? Do her writings function for the church as prophetic proclamations did for Israel, raising awareness of God’s intentions and standards (justice and compassion) for both interpersonal and corporate relationships? Do her writings serve as prophetic invitations to be part of God’s liberating and redemptive action for humanity? Do they challenge the church to be more just and compassionate in its dealings, more inclu-

Twenty-first century Adventists need to re-examine the church’s response to the woman they regard as God’s messenger. How is the prophetic voice of Ellen White appropriated and utilized in the modern church? How is her story presented in our schools?

never been abolished.”³²

Although it created great tension, she spoke boldly for the reform of unrighteous attitudes and unjust practices within the church. At various times, she addressed the condition of institutional workers, the distribution of church funds for special projects, ministry to African-Americans,³³ the care for the elderly, and fair wages for women in ministry.³⁴

When necessary, Mrs. White called institutional leaders into accountability for injustice toward their underlings, and in 1901 she demanded a restructuring of the church to redistribute the organizational and decision-making power that had been concentrated in the hands

sive in its decision-making process, more committed to the liberation of the oppressed? If her story and writings are utilized primarily to sustain group identity and establish authority and legitimacy for distinctive doctrinal positions, then has she ceased to be a truly prophetic voice in Adventism? ✍



Ginger Hanks Harwood, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Religious and Theological Studies in the H. M. S. Richards School of Divinity at La Sierra University,

Riverside, California. Among the classes she teaches are the *History of Seventh-day Adventism*, *Ellen White and the Church*, and *Adventism in Global Perspective*. Dr. Harwood also does first-person scholarly and popularized presentations about Ellen White, addressing her life story and views on various issues.

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2. Ellen White's description of her vision is included in her book, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1945), pp. 13-20.
3. See Beverly Beem and Ginger Hanks Harwood, "'Your Daughters Shall Prophesy': James White, Uriah Smith, and the 'Triumphant Vindication of the Right of the Sisters' to Preach," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 43:1 (Spring 2005):41-58. Also, Ginger Hanks Harwood and Beverly G. Beem, "'It Was Mary That First Preached a Risen Jesus': Early Seventh-day Adventist Answers to Objections to Women as Public Spiritual Leaders," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 45:2 (Autumn 2007):221-245.
4. "To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them, but my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1958], Book 1, p. 34.

5. For review of the basic Adventist understanding of the role of Ellen White, see *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2005), pp. 247-261.
6. For two recent examples of very extensive efforts to provide a solid overview and defense of Ellen White as a prophet, see Graeme S. Bradford, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 2006), and Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998).
7. Texts credited to NKJV are from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Ind., Publishers. All rights reserved.
8. Elsa Tamez has developed the analysis of the nature and relationship between the elites and those whose life efforts enrich them. She says, "oppression is historical in character and that the basic points of reference for understanding it are two identifiable and opposed groups. The oppressors are rich and influential people who never feel satisfied with what they have; their basic concern is to accumulate wealth. They turn to oppression and make use of various methods that bring them gain in one or another fashion. Oppressors are idolaters who follow false gods that can lend an aura of legitimacy to their actions; Yahweh, the God who demands that justice be done because he is himself justice and love, will not serve their purpose. The oppressed are the impoverished, the slaves, the day laborers, the widows, the resident aliens, and the orphans. All are poor and lack both social standing and power" (*Bible of the Oppressed*, Translated from Spanish by Matthew J. O'Connell [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1982], p. 53).
9. Ruether continues her observation, noting: "The prophets in Hebrew Scripture and Jesus in the Gospels are figures in conflict with religious establishments, denouncers of the use of religion to sacralize unjust privilege and to ignore the needs of the people" (Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Prophetic Tradition and the Liberation of Women: A Story of Promise and Betrayal," in Neal Reimer, ed., *Let Justice Roll: Prophetic Challenges in Religion, Politics, and Society* [Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996], pp. 59, 60).
10. *Ibid.*, p. x.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Mark Allman, an ethicist, traces the relationship between the experience of the shalom community and living in right relationship according to God's laws. See *Who Would Jesus Kill: War, Peace and the Christian Tradition* (Winona, Minn.: Anselm Academic, Christian Brothers Publications, 2008), p. 69.
13. As theologian José Miguez Bonino has noted: "Righteousness-justice is seen as the distinguishing characteristic of the kingdom—and hence as the mark of God's faithful action and people's correspondingly faith-full obedience. The condition of the poor and oppressed in fact becomes the test of God's redeeming presence and of human justice" (*Toward a Christian Political Ethics*

- [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], p. 84).
14. Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), p. 72.
 15. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), vol. 9, p. 12; and _____, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1952), p. 173.
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 17. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
 18. "Parable of the Rich Man," *Review and Herald* 71:26 (June 26, 1894):401, 402.
 19. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1908), p. 12.
 20. _____, "Our Duty to the Poor and Afflicted," *Review and Herald* 72:1 (January 1, 1895):1, 2.
 21. _____, *The Ministry of Healing*, op. cit., p. 25.
 22. _____, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1941), p. 376.
 23. _____, *Selected Messages*, op. cit., Book 1, p. 33.
 24. See _____, *Spiritual Gifts* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1944), vol. I, pp. 189-192.
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. _____, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 257.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 360.
 28. Ellen White to "Brethren in Responsible Positions in America," July 24, 1895 (B-5-1895).
 29. _____, *Testimonies for the Church*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 202.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
 31. The following is one example of her critique of American efforts toward the emancipated slaves: "Much might have been accomplished by the people of America if adequate efforts in behalf of the freedmen had been put forth by the Government and by the Christian churches immediately after the emancipation of the slaves. Money should have been used freely to care for and educate them at the time they were so greatly in need of help. But the Government, after a little effort, left the Negro to struggle, unaided, with his burden of difficulties" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 205).
 32. *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205.
 33. For example, "Our colored ministers are to be treated with consideration. This has not always been done. These men are to be encouraged to obtain a thorough knowledge of the truth. They are to learn how to be efficient in teaching the truth to others. And when they are faithfully engaged in work they should receive their hire. Remember that they must have bread" (*ibid.*, p. 223).
 34. For a careful look at Ellen White's work to ensure justice within various church enterprises, see Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Prophet and the Presidents: Ellen White's Influence on the Leadership of the Early Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2011).
 35. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, section "Our Work for Today," p. 159.