As the relationship between the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, and the Great Disappointment became clear, the Whites and Joseph Bates wanted to spread the Good News. There were twenty weekend "conferences" held between April 1848 and the end of 1850. These conferences were held in kitchens, parlors, a "large unfurnished chamber", or swept out barns.

There were seven 1848 conferences. The first and the fourth were at the farm of Albert Belden of Rocky Hill, Connecticut. There were about 50 believers at the first conference, which James White would later call "the first general meeting held by Seventh-day Adventists. In point of numbers and influence it marked a new era for the cause."

The conference was held in the "large unfurnished chamber" on the second floor of Albert Belden's house. Joseph Bates taught about the Sabbath and James White taught about the Third Angels Message.

The Whites later moved in to "the large unfurnished chamber" in the Belden house where they had the use of household furnishings left by Clarissa Bonfoey's mothers when she died. Clarissa offered to do the house work and take care of baby Henry while the Whites traveled and wrote.

On July 28, 1849, Ellen and James' second son, James Edson, was
born at the Belden Farm.

The fifth "Sabbath Conference" was held in Topsham, Maine. It ended on October 22, 1848, exactly four years after the Great Disappointment. The Sabbath keepers discussed publishing a periodical to present the exciting truths which they were learning about the Sabbath and the Sanctuary.

The sixth conference was held on November 18, 1848, at the home of Otis Nichols in Dorchester, Massachusetts. It was here that Mrs. White received a remarkable vision. When it was over she immediately said to her husband,

"I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you the means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear around the world."

Life Sketches p. 125

"Streams of light ... clear around the world!" How could this be?* There were just a few of them! Jesus was coming very soon! They had no money! Nevertheless, her poverty-stricken husband, James, would put together an eight-page publication called The Present Truth of which 1000 copies were printed on credit. From this small beginning the publishing work has grown to 59 publishing houses
that employs 3,500 workers. There are 25,000 literature evangelists which help lead 50,000 souls to baptism each year.

Interestingly enough, the press that James White first used would print 50-100 pages and hour. Today's Webb presses will produce 36,000, 32 page, 4-color magazines an hour, which is more that a million pages per hour.

*Many of the Sabbath-keepers had believed in a "shut-door" doctrine. They mistakenly thought that the door of probation had closed in 1844, and that no one in the world could be saved. Thus the idea of publications going all around the world didn't make sense to them. The "door" began to open in 1848 and was wide open by the early 1850's.
Prior to the great disappointment in 1844, the believers in Christ's soon coming frequently met for earnest seasons of prayer. At one such meeting held in the home of Brother Jordan, where about forty were present, and Elder H. led out in prayer. James White (1821-1881) became rather astonished and somewhat embarrassed as he listened to the following petition:

"O Lord, have mercy on Brother White. He is proud, and will be damned unless he gets rid of his pride. Have mercy upon him, O Lord, and save him from pride....Break his down, Lord, and make him humble. Have mercy on him. Have mercy."

The prayer went on for quite a while.

When Elder H. finally ended, all there were in stunned silence for some time. James White finally said, "Brother H., I fear you have told the Lord a wrong story. You say I'm proud. This I think is not true. But why tell this to the Lord?...Now, sir, if I am proud, so much so that you are able to give the Lord information on the subject, you can tell before these present in what I am proud. Is it in my general appearance, or my manner of speaking, praying, or singing?...Please look me over. Is it may patched boots? My rusty coat? This nearly worn-out vest? These soiled pants? Or that old hat I wear?" (Life Incidents, pp. 115,116)

Elder H. assured James that it was none of those things. Rather, he said that Brother White's symbol of pride was the starched
linen collar he was wearing. James quickly explained that his own shirt had been dirty and a good sister had offered to wash it for him. In the meantime she lent him one of her husband’s shirts, which had a starched linen collar. In fact, James said that he did not even personally own a starched collar.

References:
Laughter and Tears of Our Pioneers p.15
Commitment or singleness of purpose to accomplish the work they felt had been given them to do was a hallmark of our early pioneers. Although many illustrations might be given to demonstrate their zeal, a few incidents must have even caused them to chuckle as they later recalled what had happened.

On one occasion as Elder James White [1821-1881] was preaching the evening sermon at a camp meeting, it started to rain. Before long, it was pouring so hard that it was almost impossible for him to be heard since in those days there were no microphones. Elder White suggested, "Let's sing while we wait for the storm to subside. It won't last long." So they all sang enthusiastically, "We will stand the storm, It will not be long." And sure enough, the rain stopped as quickly as it had begun, so he was able to resume his sermon.

As James spoke that evening, he became so absorbed in what he was saying that he walked right off the platform. But this did not deter him. Picking himself up, he climbed back on the platform and kept right on talking. In fact, he built the incident right into the sermon so well that many in the audience thought he had planned the whole thing! [V. Robinson, p.20]

At another camp meeting, word came to Elder White while he was preaching that a man had just been pulled out of the nearby river, apparently drowned. Immediately James White stopped
speaking and ran to the spot. Without a moment's hesitation, he placed the victim in the proper position and administered artificial respiration. The man revived and James White then went back to complete his sermon. [V. Robinson, p.20] Whether the man's soul was saved, we do not know, but at least his life was spared so that he had another chance.

Another of our early pioneers, Elder S.N. Haskell [1833-1922] admitted that when he was travelling by train, he never read his Bible in the train station. No, it was not that he was embarrassed to be seen reading it. His problem was that once he started, he became so deeply engrossed in what he was reading, that he would forget the time and miss his train. [E.M. Robinson, p.8] While we might commend Elder Haskell for his diligence, it doubtless interfered with his getting to scheduled appointments on time!

Overall, though, God richly blessed the singleness of purpose and total commitment of our early Adventist pioneers as they shared their beliefs with others.

Reference:
Laughter and Tears of the Pioneers, p. 20, 21
IN THE PULPIT

Sometimes Ellen White's humor turned up in unusual places. On one occasion it even happened while she was preaching.

Her son, Willie, often traveled with her on speaking tours, especially after her husband, James, died. One day she was speaking at St. Helena, California. Willie sat behind her on the rostrum. While she was speaking, Ellen White, noticed that the audience seemed distracted, some even smiling. Turning around, she discovered that Willie was taking a nap. Mrs. White apologized:

"When Willie was a baby, I used to take him into the pulpit and let him speel in a basket beneath the pulpit, and he has never gotten over the habit."

She then continued her sermon.

Reference:
Laughter and Tears of the Pioneers, p. 53
HUMOR IN CLOTHES

Ellen White seemed to see the humor in the way some women dressed in her day. She favored a neat appearance. But it was apparent to her that some women were careless on this point. She once wrote of some women that "their clothing often looks as if it flew and lit upon their persons." - CG 415.

Still another time she wrote: "Sisters when about their work should not put on clothing which would make them look like images to frighten the crows from the corn." - 1T 464.

Late in her life, Ellen White received a letter from a friend of earlier days who was in Japan. No doubt this friend had known her when she was quite a bit smaller in size. As is fairly common, Ellen White had added weight in her later years. The friend had enclosed a present. Her secretary, D. E. Robinson, recalls the incident in a letter:

"This noon's mail brought a letter to her (Ellen White) from Sister DeVinney of Japan, and as a remembrance of her birthday a 'hug-me-tight' which is being interpreted a sort of warm vest to be worn on cold days. She tried it on, and instead of going around her body, the edge went about to her sides.

She told me to tell Sister DeVinney that she greatly appreciated the gift, but that there was a great deal more to her than some people thought. Which remark I think is very true." - D. E.
Robinson, November 3, 1914,