



Faith-Ann McGarrell

I tried to get out of it—I really did, but there was no getting around the requirement. If I wanted to pursue denominational teacher certification, I would have to take the course “The Gift of Prophecy,” also known among my peers as the “Ellen White course.” To make matters worse, the course was only being offered at 7:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, during a hot, humid, summer intensive session. To say I dreaded the experience would be an understatement. I imagined long, boring lectures filled with a litany of “Ellen White said. . . .” this or that, and an overwhelming emphasis on end-time events and preparing for the final crisis, since unfortunately up to this point, that had been my experience with Ellen White and prophecy in Adventist schools. She was to me, as she was to many of my generation, a mystical figure, a specter of judgment, a baton of correction.

Thankfully, my expectations were wrong. The professor for the course, a gentle, humorous, gifted storyteller, began each class period with a short reflection on a passage of Scripture, after which he led the class in singing songs of the faith—old favorites and ones we would learn throughout the semester. He shared compelling, humanizing stories about the lives of early Adventist pioneers—stories that revealed real people with human foibles in relatable experiences, some humorous, others tragic, and others still that demonstrated their passion and love for Jesus Christ and a willingness to sacrifice every material possession to spread the “good news.” Well-versed in Adventist history, he reveled in sharing stories that ripped away the façade of absolute piety behind which many of the pioneers are so often carefully shrouded. We challenged him with questions about what we had heard, or what someone claimed that “Ellen White said,” and he would answer by directing us to passages where we could read together what she truly said and in what context. His responses were kind; his demeanor, authentic. We wrote reflections and dug deep to uncover our biases, hopes, and aspirations, and by the end of that course, many found kinship with the early Adventist pioneers.

What I also did not anticipate was the impact that class would have on my personal and professional growth during that hot, humid summer and beyond. Under the guidance of a caring, kind professor, I, along with hun-

dreds of future Adventist educators over the many years since, have gained not only knowledge of the gift of prophecy, but also a balanced perspective on Ellen White’s writings in relationship to the Scriptures,<sup>1</sup> a deeper appreciation for her writings and her personal awareness of her role and her own ministry,<sup>2</sup> and an affirmation of God’s plan for each individual human being, especially those who responded to the call to teach.<sup>3</sup>

More than 20 years later, in September 2019, I had the privilege of joining 73 Adventist educators from around the world on an Adventist History Study Tour sponsored by the General Conference Department of Education. For

10 days, we visited several historic Adventist sites. We not only read and listened to stories about the early Adventist pioneers, but also visited the preserved or reconstructed homes where they once lived, walked the streets they walked, experienced what their lives might have been like as well as the challenges of day-to-day living they most likely faced. Together we pondered the recurring question: “How did they accomplish so much with so little?” We were each moved by their legacy of commitment to the cause of Christ and the search for Truth, and joined them in looking forward to the day when our “weary footsteps will never roam—our trials past, our joys complete,” and we will be “Safe in our Father’s home.”<sup>4</sup>

The articles in this issue explore a variety of topics. Barbara Fisher writes about the important role teachers have in creating age-specific experiences that can help lead students toward a relationship with God. She discusses several factors that influence their readiness for such an experience and barriers that they may encounter. Emphasized is the value of caring, nurturing teachers who model the Christian experience with authenticity (see page 12).

Three articles delve into different aspects of Ellen White’s contributions to the Adventist philosophy of education. Anna Galeniece explores the eschatological dimensions of Adventist education in the writings of Ellen White (see page 18); and, in *Perspectives*—a feature section dedicated to challenging topics in Adventist education and how educators navigate them—Derek C. Bowe shares his reflections on Ellen White, fiction, and his own response throughout the various stages of his own pro-

“Ellen White  
Said . . .”

## Dispelling Myths and Reaffirming Faith

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fessional teaching journey (see page 24). A third article, by Chantal Klingbeil, titled “Introducing Ellen White to a New Generation,” is a reprint from the *General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter*. Klingbeil offers eight helpful suggestions for introducing a new generation to the writings of Ellen White in gentle, relevant, and meaningful ways (see page 23).

Highlights from the Adventist History Study Tour are recounted in a short photo essay that recaps through narratives and photos the experiences of participants (see page 36); the second short essay introduces the “Little Red School House Restoration Project,” a project supported by Seventh-day Adventist university presidents and institutions to fund the restoration of the old school house on the William Miller Farm. Schools and institutions interested in participating will find information on how to do so on page 42.

The remaining articles include a book review—a feature we’re reintroducing after some time—of Jorge Platon Maquera Sosa’s *Caminos Que No Se Olvidan (Paths That Are Not Forgotten)* by Frank Hardy, a collection of 22 stories from students about how Seventh-day Adventist education transformed the trajectory of their individual lives (see page 34); a *Best Practices at Work* article by Javier Girarte Guillén on the power and benefits of home visits; and finally, an article that addresses a serious topic for both teachers and educational administrators as they continue their professional growth: “Avoiding Fake Degrees and Diploma Mills: Recommendations for Educators, Administrators, and Academic Registrars” by Sydney Freeman, Jr., Ibrahim Karkouti, and Ty-Ron M. O. Douglas (see page 4).

We welcome your comments and invite you to consider writing for us.<sup>5</sup> Whether a feature-length article, a book review, or a submission to our *Best Practices at Work* or *Perspectives* feature sections, your contribution to THE JOURNAL

OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION can be a source of inspiration to the beginning teacher and administrator or a treasure trove of new ideas for those already in service. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Recommended citation:

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For more, see Ellen G. White Estate®, “How Do Ellen G. White’s Writings Relate to the Bible? The Authority of Ellen G. White’s Writings” (2020): <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-scripint.html/>; EGW Writings, “The Position of ‘The Bible, and the Bible Only’ and the Relationship of This to the Writings of Ellen White” (2020): <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/741.111>.

2. See also, Ellen G. White Estate®, “Ellen G. White’s Understanding of How Her Writings Relate to Scripture” (2020): <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-scripegw.html/>.

3. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903). See specifically the chapters, “The Teacher Sent From God” (pp. 75-83) and “An Illustration of His Methods” (pp. 84-96), and the section on the “Underteacher” (pp. 275-287), where teachers in training are encouraged to meditate on God’s promises found in Revelation 3:8; Psalm 32:8; Matthew 28:20; and 2 Corinthians 3:18.

4. Annie R. Smith, “How Far From Home?” in *The Gospel in Song* (Takoma Park, Md.: Review and Herald, 1926), 198: [http://www.hymnary.org/text/how\\_far\\_from\\_home\\_i\\_asked\\_as\\_on](http://www.hymnary.org/text/how_far_from_home_i_asked_as_on).

5. Visit <https://jae.adventist.org/en/for-authors> for a complete overview of guidelines for writing and submitting an article for consideration, along with a list of preferred topics.

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