

THE
Ellen G. White
ENCYCLOPEDIA

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PREFACE

THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ELLEN G. WHITE ENCYCLOPEDIA represents approximately 15 years of dreaming, planning, and work. The project was begun in the late 1990s by our consulting editor George Knight. He saw *The C. S. Lewis Encyclopedia* and determined to prepare a similar work treating Ellen White, one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth century. Despite thousands of pages published by and about her, there was no comprehensive source to which a new reader could turn for easy access to specific information. She was a prolific writer, successful health reformer, and cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a global religious movement that now claims some 20 million adult adherents, yet she remains largely unknown to the general public.

The purpose of this book is to provide an easy-to-use standard reference that is readily comprehensible to a person without previous knowledge of the subject, yet informative enough to be useful to a specialist. Written by some 180 contributing authors from around the world, the *Encyclopedia* not only provides a concise yet comprehensive guide to the abundant resources already published about Ellen White, but also presents a considerable amount of new research. Both new and longtime readers will find reliable information, often presented from fresh new perspectives. To ensure the accuracy of the data presented, the entire manuscript was peer-reviewed by reputable scholars, further revised by the editors, and finally reedited by the publishers.

How to Use the *Encyclopedia*

The *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* is organized into three major sections, easily distinguishable by the reader. The first section includes major introductory articles on Ellen White, including her life story, the major themes of her writings, principles of interpretation, her theology, research resources, and a bibliography of secondary sources. The first section is easily recognizable by the longer articles set in single-column format with endnotes.

The second section is the biographical section, including people Ellen White interacted with, corresponded with, or wrote about. A few historical figures that were *not* her contemporaries, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, are found in the *topical* section with a discussion of their theological relationship to Ellen White. Thumbing through the book, one can recognize the third section by its mostly short articles about individuals.

The third section, the largest, contains articles on a great diversity of topics, which vary in length from several thousand words to under 100. Arranged alphabetically and set in double-column format, this section includes entries on themes or doctrines of Ellen White, books she wrote, historical events and places, and institutions she was connected with.

Each article in the topical or biographical sections is arranged alphabetically by a **boldface heading**. Within each article, references are given in parentheses, using standard abbreviations to the writings of Ellen White (see Abbreviations). For parenthetical references to other authors, see the full reference after the heading *Further reading* at the end of the article. Asterisks (*) identify topics or individuals on which there is a separate article in this *Encyclopedia*. Some articles also contain *See also* cross-references. Each article concludes with the name of the author. Unsigned articles are by the editors. The majority of the unsigned articles in the

biographical section are by assistant editor Michael W. Campbell. For further information about authors, see Contributors.

Despite utmost care by authors and editors, readers will find mistakes. If those who do will kindly notify the editors, we will make corrections in the second printing. Corrections may be sent by postal mail to Department of Church History, SDA Theological Seminary, 4145 E. Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1515.

Acknowledgments

A work of this magnitude could not have been accomplished without the support and help of many people. We are grateful to Fran McMullen, administrative assistant in the department of Church History, for her support in many ways, especially entering editorial corrections in most of the manuscript. Graduate assistants Steven Toscano, Cyril Marshall, and Denis Kaiser proofread manuscripts and checked quotations from Ellen White's publications.

Our assistant editor, Michael Campbell, played a crucial role in the early years of the project while he earned his Ph.D. in Adventist studies. He helped us compile a list of topics and of possible contributors and contacted many of them regarding their interest in this project. Furthermore, he himself contributed many substantial articles and did the original research and writing of the vast majority of the small unsigned articles.

Although George Knight passed the idea for the project to us in its early stages, he remained a major contributor and consultant during the duration of the project. We are thankful to him and to Merlin Burt, Herbert Douglass, Stan Hickerson, Jim Nix, Tim Poirier, Wilfred Stuyvesant, Alden Thompson, and Woody Whidden for reviewing various sections of the manuscript.

Academic research would be impossible without the invaluable services of librarians and archivists. We are especially indebted to the staff of the Center for Adventist Research in the James White Library at Andrews University. The directors and associates at the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, were always prompt in responding to urgent editorial inquiries. The Office of Archives and Statistics at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, also in Silver Spring, Maryland, was another indispensable, priceless resource, always available through their online periodical, book, and document collections.

The editorial staff at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, especially Jeannette Johnson and Gerald Wheeler, have been a delight to work with, and we appreciate their encouragement and expertise during all the stages of this project. We are also grateful to the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship at Andrews University for research grants that enabled us to employ graduate students during the start-up years, and to the administration of Andrews University for providing financial support and time for research and writing.

Beyond providing ready access to much information about Ellen White, we hope that by our systematizing present knowledge this work will stimulate a new wave of interest in and research about this influential religious leader and writer of the nineteenth century.

For Jesus and Scripture: The Life of Ellen G. White

Jerry Moon and Denis Kaiser

ELLEN GOULD (HARMON) WHITE (1827-1915) was one of the most remarkable women in nineteenth-century America. Her lasting significance is attested by various well-documented accomplishments. First, she was the cofounder (with Joseph Bates and James White) of a denomination that at its establishment in 1863 had 3,500 members, but has grown to a global church of some 16 million baptized members.¹ By 2010 it was the twelfth-largest religious body worldwide and the sixth-largest highly international religious body.²

Second, Ellen White was a literary phenomenon. By the time of her death on July 16, 1915, her literary corpus included 26 books, approximately 200 tracts and pamphlets, more than 5,000 periodical articles, 6,000 typewritten letters and general manuscripts, plus diaries and journals, totaling approximately 100,000 pages of material from her 70-year ministry (1844-1915).³ Today, including compilations, more than 126 titles are available in English. More impressive than the quantity of her literary productivity is the variety of subjects she addressed. She not only focused on such religious matters, such as biblical prophecy, children's ministry, evangelistic methods, homiletics, the role of women in the church, spirituality, and theology, but wrote multiple works on health and education. She also wrote articles on such diverse topics as church-state relationships, ethics and morals, family life, history, leadership, literature, marriage, medicine, mental health, public speaking, and social relationships.

Third, she succeeded in founding worldwide systems of education, medical work, and publishing. By following her advice on health, Seventh-day Adventists became a population group much studied by health scientists.⁴

While historians document her achievements,⁵ Seventh-day Adventists have a general explanation for her literary contributions, her insights on health, and her leadership in establishing institutions. They believe that the Bible foretold a renewal of the true gift of prophecy within Christianity prior to the second coming of Christ to earth, and that Ellen White's life and ministry represented at least a partial fulfillment of that biblical prediction. During the 70 years of her ministry she received an estimated 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams, ranging from less than a minute to nearly four hours in length. Although only an estimated 2 percent of her writings dealt with predictions of the future, many of her predictions were fulfilled, some during her own lifetime, others after her death in 1915, and a few are still being realized as trends she spoke about continue to unfold.⁶

At a conference of American historians in 2009, a perceptive question was raised: "What motivated Ellen White . . . to work tirelessly for the cause? What was it that made her so unique? Do her words reveal something more about her intentions and motivations?"⁷ This article seeks to uncover the primary motivations of Ellen G. White by an investigation of her personal journey as a nineteenth-century woman—daughter, wife, mother, and friend—to complement the data elsewhere in this encyclopedia about her life as a church founder and public figure.⁸ In this article Ellen White's life is divided into five periods.

1. Childhood and Teenage Years (1827-1844)
2. A New Vision—Raising a Church (1844-1863)
3. Shaping the Church and Its Mission (1863-1881)

4. Contending for the Gospel in Foreign Countries (1881-1900)

5. Senior Churchwoman (1900-1915)

The transition points of these periods are events that brought major changes either in her personal life or in the experience of Seventh-day Adventists—the disappointment of October 22, 1844; the founding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863; the death of Ellen White’s husband, James White, in 1881; the return of Ellen White from Australia to North America in 1900; and her death in 1915—though there were certainly also other events of major importance.

Childhood and Teenage Years (1827-1844)

When the twins Ellen and Elizabeth (Lizzie) were born on November 26, 1827,⁹ their parents Robert F. Harmon, Sr. (1786-1866), and Eunice Gould Harmon (1787-1863) already had two sons and four daughters.¹⁰ Both Robert and Eunice were deeply religious people; the fact that three of their six daughters married ministers may be an indication of the positive spirituality that characterized the home.¹¹

Robert and Eunice Harmon grew up at the convergence of two historic epochs—the unprecedented optimism of the religious, economic, and political freedom of the new nation, and the most vigorous phase of Methodism, which by 1855 became the largest denomination in North America.¹² While in his teens, Harmon broke with family tradition by leaving the Congregational Church to become a Methodist (LS80 130). At age 24 he married Eunice Gould from Portland, Maine, who was a year younger and also a Methodist. She was a woman of both character and spirituality. In matters of principle she served God, leaving the consequences to Him (*ibid.* 234, 235).

Her ability to think rapidly and clearly made Eunice Harmon a firm and wise disciplinarian. Ellen remembered that as a young girl she sometimes left the room with a muttered complaint when her mother asked her to do something. But her mother would call her back, requiring Ellen to repeat what she had said. Ellen recalled her mother taking up that remark and showing her that she “was a part of the family, a part of the firm; and that it was as much [Ellen’s] duty to carry [her] part of the responsibility as it was [her] parents’ duty” to take care of their children. “I had my times now and then for amusement,” Ellen later recalled, but “there was no idleness in my home, and there was no disobedience there that was not taken in hand at once” (Ms 82, 1901, in 1Bio 21). Eunice Harmon had high ideals for her children, and knew how to motivate them to those ideals.

Robert Harmon alternated between farming in Poland and Gorham and operating a hat business in Portland. Shortly after the birth of the twins—Ellen and Elizabeth—the family moved from Gorham to Portland. In 1829 the family relocated to Poland, before returning to Portland in 1833.¹³ Portland was a rapidly growing city, the largest in Maine.¹⁴ The climate of this shipbuilding center was cold, with high temperatures in midwinter hovering around 20°F (−7°C) and in the warmest part of the summer seldom above 60-70°F (16-21°C).