

## THE CHURCH AND RACE RELATIONS—Part 1

### Common Myths Defending Separate Black & White Conferences in North America

[Article Excerpted from Author's *Must We Be Silent?*]

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In the United States, the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church currently runs two racially segregated administrative structures—one for the Black, and the other for the White. The Black conferences are also known as Regional conferences because of their distinctive geographical arrangement. Even though each Black (Regional) conference covers not merely one portion of the union area but all the Black churches in the whole region of the union, membership is open to all people. [1]

The original intention for the creation of separate Black conferences in 1944 was to correct the problem of the exclusion of Black Adventists from full participation in the life of the church. As one church leader has correctly pointed out, and as we shall show in the next chapter, “the emergence of the Black church was the product of exclusion and experience. Black Christians of all denominations have always desired to be included and integrated with their White brothers and sisters in the church. But they were not always admitted, welcomed, or treated as equals. There were shameful times when they were physically thrown out of White churches.” Indeed, “the Black Church and Regional (Black) conferences” in the SDA church “were born from the womb of exclusion, inequality, and experience.”[2]

*The SDA Encyclopedia* offers three major reasons why separate Black conferences were organized: (1) greater efficiency in reaching black people with the gospel, (2) creation of more opportunities for leadership and other participation by gifted and trained Blacks, (3) more adequate representation of Blacks in elected offices and on boards and committees outside the Black Regional conferences.[3] But it concedes that this arrangement is “not ideal.” [4]

**An Embarrassment to the Church.** The continued existence of these racially distinctive structures of church governance has brought embarrassment and disrepute to the credibility of the SDA church, having created the image of the denomination as two churches—one Black and one White. It is true that no Christian denomination in the United States is innocent of racism. But for the Seventh-day Adventist church to claim to be God’s end-time remnant church and yet refuse to dismantle the visible expressions of racism is a contradiction of the gospel. [5]

Many Bible-believing SDAs worldwide also believe that these black and white conferences in North America go against the teachings of Ellen G. White (1827-1915), a founding member of the denomination and one recognized to be the recipient of what SDAs have accepted as the prophetic gift of the Bible. During her lifetime, when various Christian denominations in America were split over the thorny issues of slavery and Black and White racism, her stirring messages kept the Seventh-day Adventist church united. She led the SDA church to confront some of the

major events in the area of race relations in United States—slavery, the civil war (1861-1865), the Emancipation proclamation (1862), and the Reconstruction. As the church struggled with the issues of slavery, racial prejudice and discrimination, segregation, and its evangelistic and humanitarian responsibility in the South, she provided a prophetic voice. [6]

▣ **Common Myths Defending Racially Separate Conferences.** In spite of the fact that today's Black (Regional) conferences "were born from the womb of [racial] exclusion, inequality and experience," despite the fact that they began as "non-ideal" arrangements, and even though their existence contradicts the message of the Bible and that of Mrs. White, some still defend the continued need of these racially separate church structures.

To address whether we still need separate Black and White conferences, this chapter and the next will look at some of the main arguments often advanced in their defense. The two chapters will challenge the following popular myths about racially segregated conferences:

- (1) "The Church Has Always Been Black and White,"
- (2) "The Church Has Never Been Interested in Blacks, and Never Will,"
- (3) "Ellen G. White Called for Racially Separate Congregations,"
- (4) "Racially Separate Conferences Preserve Fellowship, Unity, and Harmony."
- (5) "Blacks Demanded Racially Separate Conferences,"
- (6) "Separate Conferences Are Still Needed in the Church Today,"
- (7) "The Time Has Not Yet Come to Dismantle the Racially Separate Conference,"
- (8) "Blacks and Whites Are Different, and Must Be Reached in Different Ways."

The intention of these two chapters is to show that the time has come for our church to dismantle the visible structures of racism that currently operate in the North American Division. Among other things, I will allow the writings of Mrs. White to respond to the above arguments. Because Mrs. White traveled very widely—to England, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Australia—her perspectives on the Black and White relations in America also offer directions to Adventists today on how they should deal with racism in its various manifestations—tribalism, anti-semitism, anti-Arabism, etc. [7]

**An Untouchable Issue.** Readers should understand that the subject to be addressed in this chapter and the next is a forbidden issue in North America. Like the ideologies of homosexuality and women's ordination, anyone who dares to challenge the myths on racially separate conferences is likely to incur the unmitigated wrath of advocates—both Black and White. In the words of Ellen White,

I know that which I now speak will bring me into conflict. This I do not covet, for the conflict has seemed to be continuous of late years; but I do not mean to live a coward or die a coward, leaving my work undone. I must follow in my Master's footsteps" (*The Southern Work*, 10).

It is not without significance that Mrs. White. made this statement in the context of race relations in America. She was not silent; neither must we.

### “The Church Has Always Been Black and White”

Those who argue for the continued existence of separate Black and White structures have often argued that the Seventh-day Adventist church, like many other Christian denominations in the United States, has from its very beginning existed as two churches—one black and one white. According to this view, this arrangement is the best way for the church to maintain racial harmony in a racially volatile American culture.

The argument that “the church has always been Black and White” is an oversimplification of Seventh-day Adventist history. Though the immediate context of Black conferences was in 1944, a background to the present racially segregated conferences can be traced back to the deplorable conditions created by American slavery, Emancipation of Black (or Negro) slaves, the ensuing Civil-War, and the worsening racial relationships created by Jim Crow segregation laws in the South during the 1870s and 1890s,

During its early years, there were no Black conferences or churches in the SDA church as we know them today. As we will later show, the creation in 1944 of Black (Regional) conferences by Seventh-day Adventists was a biblically compromising attempt to deal with slavery’s legacy of racism *without splitting the church*. Many other Christian denominations in the United States had earlier divided into two racially separate denominations over the issue. While a few Christians opposed the practice of slavery on moral and biblical grounds, a majority defended it, arguing that it was an economic or political issue. The ambivalence of Christian denominations on the question of slavery led to splits in the various Christian churches. For example, in 1844 the Methodist church was divided between Black and White denominations. A year later it divided the Baptists. In 1861 three other denominations were torn apart: the Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Newside Presbyterians.

Though these denominations provided members to the emerging Seventh-day Adventist church, our church was spared from the racial split that plagued the other denominations. Three factors account for this.

**Abolitionist Stance of Pioneers.** Several of our leading Adventist pioneers had at an earlier time identified with the Abolitionist movement, a minority movement in the USA opposing slavery. Among these were Joseph Bates, the former sea-captain who did much to convince the early Adventists of the Sabbath truth; John Preston Kellogg, the father of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (the famous surgeon, inventor of surgical instruments, and resident physician at the Battle Creek Sanitarium), William K. Kellogg (the cornflakes manufacturer); and John Byington, pioneer minister and the first president of the General Conference of SDAs. Some of the early Adventists were also closely associated with Sojourner Truth, the itinerant anti-slave lecturer, and Frederick Douglas, a distinguished Abolitionist.[8]

**Strong Words from Ellen G. White.** Ellen G. White’s strong opposition to slavery predisposed the attitudes of early Adventists on Black and White race relations. Mrs. White spoke out against slavery at a time when many Christian writers were defending the practice. Arguing on the basis of Scripture, she maintained that Christ “laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common

brotherhood, [and are] recognized as equal in the sight of God” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 7:225).

Explaining why Whites should not despise and ostracize Blacks, she wrote: “The religion of the Bible recognizes no cast or color. It ignores rank, wealth, worldly honor. God estimates men as men. With Him, character decides their worth. And we are to recognize the Spirit of Christ in whomsoever it is revealed. No one need be ashamed to speak with an honest black man in any place or to shake him by the hand. He who is living in the atmosphere in which Christ lives will be taught of God and will learn to put His estimate on men” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 9:223).

Mrs. White also argued: “The same price was paid for the salvation of the colored man as for that of the white man, and the slights put upon the colored people by many who claim to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and who therefore acknowledge themselves debtors to Christ, misrepresent Jesus, and reveal that selfishness, tradition, and prejudice pollute the soul. They are not sanctified through the truth. Those who slight a brother because of his color are slighting Christ” (*Southern Work*, 13).

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, a number of laws were enacted in the United States to maintain the system of slavery. For example, the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) required “all good citizens” to return runaway slaves to their masters. Those who failed to do so risked paying a heavy penalty. In an effort to circumvent this law, some courageous individuals employed the Underground Railroad, a resistance effort that was dangerous and fraught with misunderstanding. During this critical period, when laws were made to keep Black slaves in perpetual servitude to their White masters, Ellen G. White took a very strong position in favor of the ostracized Black race. She urged civil disobedience on theological grounds:

“When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God's workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:201-202). Mrs. White's position was not just a civil disobedience, but a moral disobedience—consistent with the biblical teaching.[9]

Explaining why the slaves needed to escape, she wrote: “I was shown how our leading men have treated the poor slaves who have come to them for protection. Angels have recorded it. Instead of breaking their yoke and letting the oppressed go free, these men have made the yoke more galling for them than when in the service of their tyrannical masters. Love of liberty leads the poor slaves to leave their masters and risk their lives to obtain liberty. They would never venture to leave their masters and expose themselves to the difficulties and horrors attending their recapture if they had not as strong a love for liberty as any of us. The escaped slaves have endured untold hardships and dangers to obtain their freedom, and as their last hope, with the love of liberty burning in their breasts, they apply to our Government for protection; but their confidence has been treated with the utmost contempt. Many of them have been cruelly treated because they committed so great a crime as to dare to make an effort to

obtain their freedom.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:257).

In a stirring rebuke to Christians who apparently supported the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the law that demanded the return of slaves to their masters, Mrs. White 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, to suffer inhuman cruelty for daring to seek their liberty. Some of this wretched class they thrust into unwholesome dungeons, to live or die, they cared not which. They have deprived them of the 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! The Lord saith by the mouth of Isaiah: ‘Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God’” (ibid, 257).

In a 1863 statement entitled “Slavery and the War,” Ellen G. White declared that God Himself was bringing judgment against America for “the high crime of slavery.” She explained that the reason for the protracted Civil War in America was twofold: “He [God] will punish the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for so long suffering its overreaching and overbearing influence” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:264).

According to Ellen White, slavery of Blacks was in the sight of God “a sin of the darkest dye.” She, therefore, demanded that any Adventist who publicly defended the practice should be disfellowshipped from the church. “Some have been so indiscreet as to talk out their pro-slavery principles--principles which are not heaven-born, but proceed from the dominion of Satan. These restless spirits talk and act in a manner to bring a reproach upon the cause of God.” She wrote to one such individual: “I was shown some things in regard to you. I saw that you were deceived in regard to yourself. You have given occasion for the enemies of our faith to blaspheme, and to reproach Sabbathkeepers. By your indiscreet course, you have closed the ears of some who would have listened to the truth. I saw that we should be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. You have manifested neither the wisdom of the serpent nor the harmlessness of the dove. . . . Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the sacred, important truths for this time.

She continued, “You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other. . . . You have cast your influence on the wrong side, with those whose course of life is to sow thorns and plant misery for others. I saw you casting your influence with a degraded company, a Godforsaken company; and angels of God fled from you in disgust. I saw that you were utterly deceived. Had you followed the light which God has given you, had you heeded the instructions of your brethren, had you listened to their advice, you would have saved yourself and saved the precious cause of truth. But notwithstanding all the light given, you have given publicity to your 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, in order to save the impression which must go out in regard to us as a people. We must let it be known that we have no such ones in our fellowship, that we will not walk with them in church capacity*” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 1:355-359, emphasis mine). [10]

In summary, Ellen G. White maintained that, (1) all races are equal and deserve just

treatment; (2) slavery was a sin; it was for this reason God visited judgment on America during the Civil War between the North and the South; (3) SDAs should not support any form of slavery—subtle or blatant; those who did so should be disfellowshipped; (4) SDAs and all Christians should assist slaves and former slaves “to improve their condition.”

Given the abolitionist stance of influential Adventist figures, and the strong words of Ellen G. White against slavery, it was unthinkable for the early Adventist church to be a divided church—one for Whites and another for Black. Notes one Adventist historian: “Because of William Miller’s Negro following, one is not surprised that later, when Seventh-day Adventist churches were formally organized, throughout New England congregations that were largely white included Americans of African descent.” [11]

Thus, the argument that the Adventist church has always been black and white is without merit.

□ □ **Relatively Small Black Presence.** A final reason why the SDA church was not split over the racial issue was because there was initially only a relatively small presence of Blacks in the Adventist church. They could not have formed congregations of their own, let alone a conference. Blacks who were part of the Advent (Millerite) movement worshiped with White believers. The Seventh-day Adventist church was formally organized in 1863. It was only eight years later (1871) that some work for Blacks in the South was reported. [12] It took repeated appeals and admonitions from Ellen G. White in the 1890s before the work for Blacks moved ahead with momentum. [13]

### “The Church Has Never Been Interested in Blacks, and Never Will”

Advocates of racially exclusive conferences sometimes argue that the church has not always been interested in the well-being and evangelism of Blacks. They fear that dismantling Black (Regional) conferences will seriously undermine the Black work.

This argument is partly true and partly false. It can be demonstrated that Whites have not always been eager to advance work among Black people. But there is no logical correlation of this historical fact with the fear of dismantling today’s Black conferences. The argument would be valid if it can be shown that today’s church in North America is still not interested in outreach to Blacks. And even when that is proven to be the case, the solution would not necessarily require racially separate church structures.

□ **Neglect of the Black Work.** Without question, a compelling case can be made to show that between the 1870s (when some work was reported among Blacks in the South) and 1890s (when Ellen White repeatedly appealed to the church to labor among Blacks), White Adventists, by and large, acquiesced to their ambient culture. They accepted the racially segregated status quo in society, showing little interest in the deplorable plight of Blacks and manifesting disdain for Blacks.

Ellen White spoke to this sad situation. Beginning in the early 1890s she made repeated

appeals to the church, urging its evangelistic forces to enter the great harvest field of the South (where a large majority of Blacks were located). In 1891 she presented her first comprehensive appeal to the thirty church leaders at the twenty-ninth session of the General Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan. It was titled "Our Duty to Colored People." It was by far the most courageous and far-reaching statement of Mrs. White. She anticipated some opposition. Thus, she wrote:

"I know that which I now speak will bring me into conflict. This I do not covet, for the conflict has seemed to be continuous of late years; but I do not mean to live a coward or die a coward, leaving my work undone. I must follow in my Master's footsteps" (*The Southern Work*, 10).

She continued: "It has become fashionable to look down upon the poor, and upon the colored race in particular. But Jesus, the Master, was poor, and He sympathizes with the poor, the discarded, the oppressed, and declares that every insult shown to them is as if shown to Himself. I am more and more surprised as I see those who claim to be children of God possessing so little of the sympathy, tenderness, and love which actuated Christ. Would that every church, North and South, were imbued with the spirit of our Lord's teaching" (*The Southern Work*, 10-11).

**Major Thrust in the Black Work.** Ellen G. White's 1891 appeal to church leaders outlined principles to develop work among Black people. Copies of the message were distributed to key leaders, ministers in the South, and lay persons. It was also circulated in manuscript form and later printed in a leaflet. Two years later, this appeal stirred the missionary zeal of her son James Edson White, leading him to launch evangelistic and educational work among the neglected people of the South. In 1894, he constructed a 75-foot steamboat, christened *The Morning Star*, and sailed it down the Mississippi River. The \$3,700 boat provided residence, chapel, school room, a library, photographic room with a darkroom, printshop for publishing educational and agricultural work among blacks. Thus, began his evangelistic work at Vicksburg, Mississippi, in January 1895.

Despite Edson White's tireless labor, there was still a continued lack of interest in the Black work. One reason for this could have been the economic and political unrest between the 1870's and 1890's. Partly for fear, and partly from comfort, White Adventists in the North were not easily disposed to labor for Blacks in the South. During this period, Ellen White continued to urge more Adventists to go into the vineyards of the South. She gave reasons why they should go, counsels on how they should conduct themselves there, and encouragement to those already laboring there. Her appeals have been preserved in the small booklet *The Southern Work*, in *Testimonies for the Church* volumes seven (pages 220-245), and in *Testimonies for the Church* volume eight (pages 34, 59-61, 91, 137, 150, 205). Some of the titles of her articles in *The Southern Work* will give some idea of the burden of Mrs. White. [14]

On March 20, 1891, she appealed to church leaders: "Sin rests upon us as a church because we have not made greater effort for the salvation of souls among the colored people. It will always be a difficult matter to deal with the prejudices of the white people in the South and do missionary work for the colored race. But the way this matter has been treated by some is an offense to God. We need not expect that all will be accomplished in the South that God would do until in our missionary efforts we place this question on the ground of principle, and let those who accept the truth be educated to be Bible Christians, working according to Christ's order" (*The Southern Work*, 15).

On April 2, 1895, she wrote: "I have a most earnest interest in the work to be done among the colored people. This is a branch of work that has been strangely neglected. The reason that this large class of human beings, who have souls to save or to lose, have been so long neglected, is the prejudice that the white people have felt and manifested against mingling with them in religious worship. They have been despised, shunned, and treated with abhorrence, as though crime were upon them, when they were helpless and in need, when men should have labored most earnestly for their salvation. They have been treated without pity. The priests and the Levites have looked upon their wretchedness, and have passed by on the other side" (*ibid.*, 19)

Again, she wrote on November 26, 1895: "Why should not Seventh-day Adventists become true laborers together with God in seeking to save the souls of the colored race? Instead of a few, why should not many go forth to labor in this long-neglected field? Where are the families who will become missionaries and who will engage in labor in this field? Where are the men who have means and experience so that they can go forth to these people and work for them just where they are? There are men who can educate them in agricultural lines, who can teach the colored people to sow seed and plant orchards. There are others who can teach them to read, and can give them an object lesson from their own life and example. Show them what you yourself can do to gain a livelihood, and it will be an education to them. Are we not called upon to do this very work? Are there not many who need to learn to love God supremely and their fellow men as themselves? In the Southern field are many thousands of people who have souls to save or to lose. Are there not many among those who claim to believe the truth who will go forth into this field to do the work for which Christ gave up His ease, His riches, and His life?" (*ibid.*, 27).

**A Key Question.** Without doubt, White Adventists for the most part neglected to labor among Blacks in the 1890's. The question before us now is whether dismantling Black (Regional) conferences will lead to the same neglect. That case is yet to be made. It is, however, a historical fact and a matter of encouragement that, stirred by Ellen White, the church in her day came to an understanding of its duty and began a work among Black people that was to grow and prosper. Why can't the same message stir us even after we dismantle today's Black conferences--the visible expression of America's post-slavery racism?

## Endnotes

[1] There are presently nine Black (Regional) conferences in the North American Division, having largely Black constituency and leadership. However, the Pacific and North Pacific unions currently have no Regional conferences. Instead, they have union and conference Regional Departments that serve in an advisory capacity for the Black constituency in their respective areas. In Canada, there are churches that are predominantly Black, churches that are predominantly White, and churches that are fully integrated—but no separate conferences. In Bermuda, most of the churches have a majority of Black members and the conference has a Black president (cf. *SDA Encyclopedia* [1976], 1191).

[2] Helvius L. Thompson, “Do We Still Need Regional (Black) Conferences?” in Delbert W. Baker, ed., *Telling the Story: An Anthology on the Development of the Black SDA Work* (Loma Linda, Calif.: Loma Linda University Printing Services, 1996), 2/53.

[3] The *SDA Encyclopedia* notes that the Regional conferences were formed “in the hope that the new organizations might, with concentration on work within a specific ethnic group, achieve greater results in a shorter space of time than would be achieved under the previously existing organizations (in some cases under a departmental or mission arrangement). The plan has been responsible for an evangelistic penetration into the Negro [Black] community that had not been possible under the organizations that formerly administered the work among the nation’s Negro membership. The Regional conferences also have created more opportunities for leadership and other participation by gifted and trained Negro young people of the church whose selection in the same or similar capacities had not worked out in the years prior to the formation of the Regional conferences. Another practical result has been that colored members of the SDA Church have been more readily and more naturally represented in elected offices and on boards and committees outside the Regional conferences than appears to have been true formerly” ( *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* [Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1976], 1192).

[4] The first edition (1966) of the *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1059-1060, prefaces the above success story of Regional conferences (see previous note), stating that “church leaders admit it is not ideal.” The “not ideal” preface is, however, omitted in the revised (1976) edition. It appears that, within 10 years of existence, what started out as a non ideal arrangement had become ideal. We shall later show that indeed, today’s leadership of the North American Division has no desire to dismantle the Black/White structure.

[5] I say “refuse” because even after the much publicized October 27-30, 1999 “Summit on Race,” a parenthetical paragraph in the document, *Suggested Activities Plan and Timetable for North American Division Race Relations Follow-up*, makes it clear that its strategic plan to achieve “inclusiveness and racial harmony” does not include the dismantling of the race based conference structure in the NAD. See the *Suggested Activities Plan and Timetable for North American Division Race Relations Follow-up*, 3, 4. The Document contains the recommendations from the 1999 Race Summit, and was prepared by the Office of Human Relations and presented to the President of the North American Division. Later in this chapter, I will take a closer look at this Document.

[6] “Ellen White can rightfully be called the initiator of the Black work. No person had a

greater impact on the inclusion and status of Black people in the Adventist church; it is impossible to talk about Black Adventist history without constantly referring to her contributions. All significant workers in the early Black work, either directly or indirectly, pointed to either Ellen White or her writings as the source of their inspiration and guidance. There would have been little hope for the Black work had Ellen White not championed the cause" (Delbert W. Baker, *Adventist Review*, "In Search of Roots: Adventist African-Americans," Part 1 ["Exploring the History"], February 4, 1993, 14.

[7] For insights and primary sources on this subject, I am indebted to Ronald D. Graybill, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1970) and Delbert W. Baker, "The Dynamics of Communication and African-American Progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Organization: A Historical Descriptive Analysis" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, 1993); idem, "Black Seventh-day Adventists and the Influence of Ellen G. White," in Calvin B. Rock, ed., *Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twenty-first Century* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1996), 21-27; idem, "Ellen White: A Pioneer in Race Relations," in Delbert W. Baker, ed., *Make Us One: Celebration Spiritual Unity in the Midst of Cultural Diversity* (Boise, Id.: Pacific Press, 1995), 83-103; idem, *The Unknown Prophet* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1987).

[8] Joseph Bates (1792-1872) helped found the Abolitionist movement in his home town. John Preston Kellogg (1807-1881) harbored fleeing slaves on his Michigan farm. John Byington (1798-1887) had maintained a station of the Underground Railroad at his home in Buck's Bridge, NY, illegally transporting slaves from the South to Canada. Sojourner Truth (c. 1797-1883), one of the Black heroes of abolition, was closely associated with the SDA work in Battle Creek. This itinerant lecturer against slavery enjoyed the friendship of John Byington, Dr. J. H. Kellogg, and other prominent SDAs. Not only did she regularly attend the Battle Creek Tabernacle church and camp meetings, but many students of the Battle Creek college visited her home near Battle Creek regularly. In fact, one of her books was printed by the Adventist publishing house. Frederick Douglas's was attracted to the faith; though he never joined the church his daughter became an Adventist. The fact that leading Adventist figures had previously been Abolitionists undoubtedly influenced the attitude of the early SDA church on the question of the relationship between Blacks and Whites. For a sympathetic discussion, see F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1944), 54, 175-178, 301; Roy Branson, "Ellen G. White: Racist or Champion of Equality?" *Review*, April 9, 1970, 3; Ronald D. Graybill, "The Abolitionist-Millerite Connection," in Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointment: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 139-152; Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists With an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1984), 22-27. For an alternate assessment, see Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart,

*Seeking A Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*  
(San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 194-197.

[9] See my *True to Principle: Radical Discipleship in God's End-Time Church* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Berean Books, 2000), 25-34.

[10] Ellen White also chided White Adventists who apparently found unattractive the task of working among "degraded" and "repulsive" Blacks. She wrote: "God cares no less for the souls of the African race that might be won to serve Him than He cared for Israel. He requires far more of His people than they have given Him in missionary work among the people of the South of all classes, and especially among the colored race. Are we not under even greater obligation to labor for the colored people than for those who have been more highly favored? Who is it that held these people in servitude? Who kept them in ignorance, and pursued a course to debase and brutalize them, forcing them to disregard the law of marriage, breaking up the family relation, tearing wife from husband, and husband from wife? If the race is degraded, if they are repulsive in habits and manners, who made them so? Is there not much due to them from the white people? After so great a wrong has been done them, should not an earnest effort be made to lift them up? The truth must be carried to them. They have souls to save as well as we" (*Southern Work*, 14-15).

[11] Louis Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 22.

[12] *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1192.

[13] At the time of Mrs. White's 1891 appeal, "there were not more than 20 colored Seventh-day Adventists south of the Mason-Dixon Line . . . at a time when we had a world membership of about 30,000" (Arthur L. White, "Survey of the E. G. White Writings Concerning the Racial Question." A paper presented to the Human Relations Committee, September 13, 1961, available at the E. G. White Research Center as Document DF 43-e). Helvius Thompson also mentions that "by 1890, there were about 50 Black Adventists in the south" (Thompson, "Do We Still Need Regional (Black) Conferences?" 2/50).

[14] "Our Duty to the Colored People," "Work Among the Colored People," "An Appeal for the Southern Field," "An Example in History," "The Bible the Colored People's Hope," "Spirit and Life for the Colored People," "Am I My Brother's Keeper?," "Lift Up Your Eyes and Look on the Field," "Volunteers Wanted for the Southern Field," "Proper Methods of Work in the Southern Field," "The Field Becoming Difficult," "A Neglected Work." Most of these articles were published by the same titles in *Review and Herald*, April 2, 1895; Nov. 26, 1895; Dec. 3, 1895; Dec. 10, 1895; Dec. 17, 1895; Dec. 24, 1895; Jan. 14, 1896; Jan. 21, 1896; Jan. 28, 1896; Feb. 4, 1896.