

A Bimonthly Publication of the Ellen G. White Seventh-day  
Adventist Research Centre, Northern Caribbean University

## *Spirit of Prophecy Newsletter*

### “WAS MRS. WHITE REALLY BLACK—AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED?”

Gosnell Yorke

#### The Spirit of Prophecy Newsletter

The *Spirit of Prophecy Newsletter* is a publication dedicated to the promotion of the truth concerning God's revelation through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Prophecy. This Newsletter is published by the Ellen G. White SDA Research Centre, NCU, to encourage and equip readers to participate in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church especially throughout the English-speaking Caribbean.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Throughout North America (the USA and Canada) and now even in some parts of the Caribbean (such as here at NCU in Jamaica), February has been designated Black History Month. It is a tradition which goes back to the 1920s when it began in the USA as Black History Week. In the 1960s, the event was later “upped” to a Month.

The month is one during which African-Americans (or, as I myself prefer to say, Africans-in-America) and others of African descent seek to affirm themselves via their rich histories and socio-cultural traditions. And in doing so, they seek to *expose* past (and present) racial prejudices and pathologies, *explode* the myths of any remnants of Black or African cultural inferiority and/or incompetence, and *explore* creative ways to enhance their quality of life within both church and society.

Since this our bimonthly Newsletter encompasses both February and March of this year, we thought it fitting to address issues relevant to Black History Month as well and to do so in light of Mrs. White's own inspired works and writings.

Further, we are doing so against the backdrop of some who contend that, perhaps, Mrs. White, like President Barack Obama himself, shares an African ancestry with African-Americans.

#### THE CLAIM THAT MRS. WHITE WAS BLACK

In recent times, the one who, more than most, perhaps, has tried to make and defend this rather provocative claim is Dr. Charles E. Dudley, a retired African-American Church administrator. Informed by, among other things, the apparent African features of Mrs. White—her phenotypical characteristics—Dr. Dudley published a book in 1999 in which he contended that Mrs. White's mother, Eunice Gould, actually descended from the Gould line which finally settled in Gouldtown, New Jersey (USA); and that, among such Goulds, was a Benjamin. Benjamin, we are told, married a white American woman but was himself one of five Black brothers who hailed initially from here in the Dutch West Indies—thus making Mrs. White someone with an African ancestry. Further, Dr. Dudley



contended that Mrs. White and her family were members of, and therefore attended an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

In response, the Ellen G. White Estate, according to Elder James Nix, its Director, commissioned Mr. Roger D. Joslyn, a highly qualified genealogist, to study Dr. Dudley's claims and contentions. In fact, this was the second of two such genealogists who, over the years—going back to the 1980s—had been commissioned by the White Estate to look into this somewhat contentious matter. **(Continued on p. 2)**

## “WAS MRS. WHITE REALLY BLACK—AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED?” cont’d

In terms of Mr. Joslyn, the second genealogist, initial contact was made with him on behalf of the White Estate by Elder Tim Poirier, Vice-Director, in March 2000. However, based on the available evidence, Mr. Joslyn, as was the case with the first genealogist (Ms. Alice Soule) was unable to confirm Dr. Dudley’s research and findings.

In addition, subsequent interaction between Dr. Dudley and others at the White Estate—including Elder Nix himself—forced the Ellen G. White Estate to come to the following conclusion (as updated on April 3, 2003): “The White Estate’s current position regarding Ellen White’s ancestry is based on two professional genealogical studies, both of which demonstrated that Ellen White was of Anglo-Saxon origin. Since no documented evidence to the contrary has been found, the White Estate accepts the conclusions of the two genealogists that Ellen White’s ancestors came directly from England to New England in 1635” (see “Ellen White’s Racial Background” by James Nix in *Ellen White* and *Current Issues*

*Symposium*, sponsored by the Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Vol. 1, 2005, page 43).

### MRS. WHITE’S ALL-INCLUSIVE VISION OF THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

More relevant to Black History Month, perhaps, in so far as a white Mrs. White and her inspired writings are concerned, is her consistent commitment to the all-inclusive and all-embracing love of God in Christ as seen in His welcoming and accepting of all of us into His Kingdom of both grace and glory—regardless of race, ethnicity or whatever else.

In this regard, allow me to share a quotation or two with you, the Reader, in closing. The quotations capture the very pith and substance of Mrs. White’s consistent position which one can locate in a number of her writings such as *Ministry of Healing*, *Steps to Christ*, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, and the various *Testimonies to the Church*—such as Volumes 7, 8 and 9.

Writing on November 9, 1899 from Maitland, New South Wales, Australia, Mrs. White had this to say to a White missionary working in South Africa:

“Some of the workers [from America] have been hindrances and not helps. The day of God will reveal the results of their work. They made confusion because they were not converted. Self was working without power of the pure, true agency. Had these workers been sanctified,

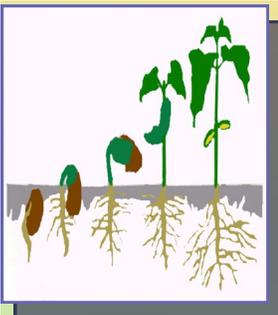
purified and cleansed from all selfishness and self-superiority, had they had a genuine experience in the things of God, had their example and influence been right, Africa would not be what it is today” (*Special Testimonies to Africa*, page 82).

And writing later from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia on February 15, 1900, Mrs. White, still speaking on behalf of Black South Africans at the time, had the following to say:

“We are all supposed be to preparing for the same heaven. We have the same heavenly Father and the same Redeemer, who loved us and gave Himself for us all, without any distinction. When the love of Christ is cherished in the heart as it should be, when the sweet, subduing spirit of the love of God fills the soul-temple, there will be no caste, no pride of nationality; no difference will be made because of the colour of the skin.... Ask yourself if Christ would make any difference.... In one place the proposition was made that a curtain be drawn between the coloured [Black] people and the white people. I asked, would Jesus do that? This grieves the heart of Christ. The colour of the skin is no criterion as to the value of the soul.... God has taken us, all classes, all nations, all languages, all nationalities, and brought us into His workshop, to be prepared for His temple” (*Ibid*, pages 85-86).

**(continued on p. 6)**

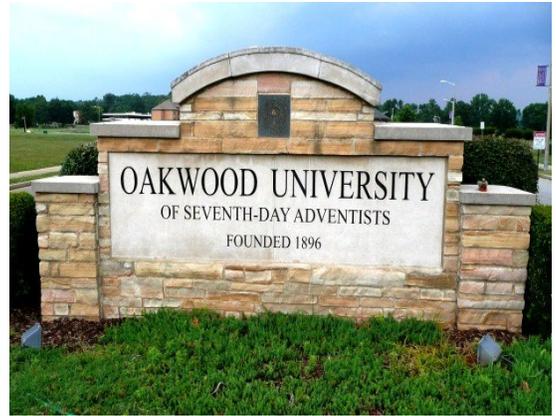
## FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH



“The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 65

## Did you know?

Edson White found a 16-page booklet entitled *Our Duty to the Coloured People* written by his mother Ellen White. This encouraged him to set up a mission to spread the Advent message to coloured people in the South of the United States. His work in the mid-1890s saw the development of a training school for black workers in Oakwood, Alabama which today has risen to University status [Oakwood University]. (Knight, George, *A Brief History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Review and Herald, 2004)



## The Importance of Fibre

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For use in bread making, the superfine white flour is not the best. Its use is neither healthful nor economical. Fine-flour bread is lacking in nutritive elements to be found in bread made from the whole

wheat. It is a frequent cause of constipation and other unhealthful conditions. *Ministry of Healing*, p. 300.3

### Medical Science Speaks:

Medical Science proves that whole grain outdoes white flour in a host of nutrient comparisons. For example, white bread virtually has no fibre; whole grain bread is a good source. Fibre appears able to decrease a host of

diseases including heart disease, cancer, constipation, appendicitis and varicose veins. (Based on Research done by Dr. Neil Nedley, author of *Proof Positive*.)



# Youth Issues

## *True Courtesy*

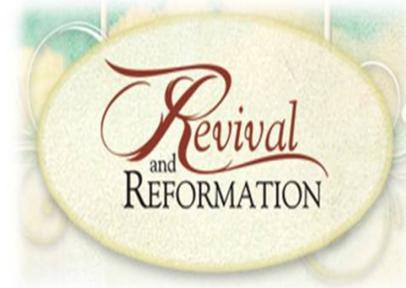
In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.

The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus. Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Saviour! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet.

No man who has the true ideal of what constitutes a perfect character will fail to manifest the sympathy and tenderness of Christ. The influence of grace is to soften the heart, to refine and purify the feelings, giving a heaven-born delicacy and sense of propriety.

*Messages to Young People, p. 420*

## Revival and Reformation



Everyone needs now to seek the Lord. God's people will not endure the test unless there is a revival and a reformation. The Lord will not admit into the mansions He is preparing for the righteous, one soul who is self-sufficient.

*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 7, p. 285*

God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children. *Selected Messages, Bk. 1, p. 127.3*

A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.--*The Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902.*

There must be decided

changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Corinthians 7:11. *Steps to Christ, p. 39*

The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you

must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that He may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified \_\_\_\_\_

that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain \_\_\_\_\_ will come,

and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.--*The Review and Herald, March 22, 1892. Selected Messages, Bk. 1, p. 190*

*"Today you are to give yourself to God .."*

**“WAS MRS. WHITE REALLY BLACK—AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED?” cont’d**

**CONCLUSION**

It is on the basis of these profound Christian convictions that I suggest that Mrs. White would have had no hesitation in endorsing the basic message(s) which the annual celebration of Black History Month seeks to convey to all and sundry. And as was mentioned earlier, this bimonthly Newsletter is meant to cover both February and March of this year. It is therefore fitting and proper, it would seem to me, that we conclude this “February Black History Month Issue” of the Newsletter with the observation that it was actually on March 22, 1966, that the Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate chose to re-publish, in book form (96 pages), all the relevant counsels which Mrs. White was inspired to give Edson, her son, and others, while she was in Australia (1891-1900). Such counsels were meant to guide Edson and

others in their post-Civil War ministry to, and in their concerted Christian efforts in helping to uplift all African-Americans in the Southern United States—those African-Americans who were still disenfranchised and made to feel despised and rejected at the time. Such inspired counsels regarding God’s all-inclusive love in Christ can now be found in the book, *The Southern Work*.

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**PUZZLE**

Find the following nationalities. The unused letters can be used to determine the hidden phrase:

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

J	A	P	A	N	E	S	E	W	A	E	T	A	
R	U	O	M	K	U	C	E	A	N	L	R	L	C
N	S	L	E	E	R	U	E	N	G	L	I	S	H
A	T	E	R	E	O	B	O	N	O	G	N	P	I
I	R	S	I	R	P	A	Z	U	L	U	I	A	N
M	A	E	C	G	E	N	I	N	A	Y	D	N	E
A	L	J	A	M	A	I	C	A	N	A	A	I	S
H	I	C	N	H	N	R	I	S	S	N	D	A	E
A	A	F	R	I	C	A	N	T	J	E	I	R	T
B	N	S	N	A	I	T	I	A	H	S	A	D	U
E	S	U	I	N	D	I	A	N	S	E	N	S	R
S	N	A	I	D	A	B	R	A	B	L	A	O	K

African, American, Angolans, Australian, Bahamian, Barbadian, Chinese, Cuban, English, European, Greek, Guyanese, Haitians, Indians, Jamaican, Japanese, Lao, Poles, Spaniards, Trinidadian, Turk, Zulu

## PIONEER OF THE MONTH

### Anna Knight (1874-1972)



Anna Knight was an educator, nurse, missionary, Bible and departmental worker, and author. When she was a child in Mississippi, educational opportunities for African American children were almost nonexistent. She learnt basic reading skills by listening, on Sundays, to white children read and spell. Having no pencil or paper, she practiced her



writing by scratching the earth with a stick.

One Sunday morning Anna found a column in a magazine inviting readers to send their names for correspondence. She sent her name in, and received 40 offers of books, magazines, and correspondence. Two of these were from Seventh-day Adventist. Bundles of Adventist papers soon arrived. Finally, because she could not afford so many stamps, she settled on one correspondent, Edith Embree, a clerk in the Seventh-day Adventist track society at Oakland, California. Edith first gift book to her was Ellen White's *Steps to Christ*. In two nights she read it through. The weekly mail came from Edith with some lessons on the heavenly sanctuary, and Anna devoured these lessons.

She studied long hours, and gave her heart to the Lord. She finally determined to keep the Sabbath.

Anna attend Mount Vernon Academy, and in 1898, graduated from Battle Creek College as a missionary Nurse. She served as the first missionary of African decent to be sent to India by any Christian denomination. In later years she practised

nursing, taught, and did Bible work in the South. She

also served in the Southern

Union Education Department for a time. At 98 years of age Anna was president of the National Colored Teachers' Association.

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*Knight is a famous black pioneer of the SDA church*

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## Sabbath Programmes at the Research Centre

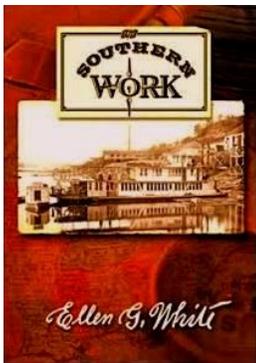


The Centre opens its doors to one church per month to worship on a Sabbath at our facilities. We also conduct seminars and AY programmes at local churches. For appointments call or e-mail us at the address on this page



**We are on the Web:**  
<http://egw-sdaresearch.ncu.edu.jm/>

## BOOK OF THE MONTH



The *Southern Work* is a compilation of articles written by Ellen G. White for publication in the *Review and Herald*. It consists of an appeal to the church of 1891 entitled "Our duty to coloured people," *Review* articles and some letters of counsel. Edson White

who was impressed to work with the coloured people decided to compile this inexpensive booklet of the basic materials that his mother had written on the work in the South. This typeset and printing was done in his little *Morning Star* printing shop in the summer 1898.

*Do you have any questions or comments on Spirit of Prophecy matters?*

*If you do, please call us or send your questions to:*

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