

# The Role of Prophecy in Our Lives

Ria de Kock

When we left South Africa in early 1994, we could hardly have imagined the exciting journey we were really embarking on. In Edwin's briefcase was the beginning of a book on prophecy. And since Seventh-day Adventists are a prophetic people, the move was propitious, especially because of the abundant libraries and research materials freely available in the United States. Amazingly, too, on the very day we landed in the west coast city of San Francisco, 29 March 1994, Evangelicals and Catholics signed an ecumenical agreement of cooperation on the east coast in New York city. What prophecy had predicted at least 150 years earlier was moving one step closer to fulfillment.

Difficult years followed, in which we had to work harder and be more flexible than ever before in our lives. We spent a year as volunteer missionaries in Inchon, South Korea. Back in America, for the sake of employment, I had to take a Master's degree and have since 2004 been teaching in the English Department at the University of Texas–Pan American, Edinburg. I started this work at an age when most people have already retired!

In the meantime, after eleven years of research and writing, Edwin finished and published his *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*. In the middle of 2001, at the age of 71, he suffered heart failure, spending eight days in hospital. He was still there when I placed the first copy of his book in his hands. It was favorably reviewed in the *Adventist Review* as well as *Ministry* magazine, sold by several Adventist Books Centers, and thrice prescribed for Master of Divinity students at the Andrews University Seminary. Its updated version is now available only as a data CD.

Important spin-offs followed. *Christ and Antichrist* was highly regarded by the Dean of Religion at the Universidad de Montemorelos in Mexico. On his recommendation, Edwin became an invited speaker there at an important Symposium on Eschatology conducted by the Central America Division of Seventh-day Adventists in March 2003. The high-ranking presenters, some from Andrews University and others from very far away (even Spain), included Dr. Angel Rodriguez, Director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference. All of them spoke Spanish—all, that is, except Edwin, who had a translator. He presented four lectures, of which an abbreviated version was published by Montemorelos University as “La escatología a través de la historia” (Eschatology Through History) in *Perspectivas Teológicas*.

Back at home in Texas, he polished this material, renaming it “Two Thousand Years of Prophetic Interpretation,” for another book, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth*. He also added further important chapters such as “Seven Keys for Unlocking the Mysteries of Revelation,” and inter alia two shockers, “History as Christian Forgery” and “History and Prophecy as Christian Mythology.” Our good friend, Dr. William Shea, the foremost authority on the year-day principle in prophecy, in his foreword to *Use and Abuse of Prophecy* lauded Edwin for being able to condense into one chapter the essence of what Le Roy Edwin Froom had covered in the four thick volumes of his monumental *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*.

*The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* was due to appear in January 2007. The almost 400 references contained in it are indicative of a great intellectual grasp of facts, though it is written in the same pleasant, clear style, for which his first book was noted. This second work has also been used at the Andrews University Theological Seminary for Master of Divinity students.

But before it went to the printer, Edwin was flown up by the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to Lansing, Michigan, as a speaker during an important Ministerial retreat and Bible Conference on prophecy at Camp au Sable, in August 2006. The other participants came from, amongst other places, Andrews University and even Brazil. The presentations constituted a wide survey of the church's prophetic views. Edwin's two lectures provided an improved version of what he had covered at Montemorelos three years earlier. Afterwards, Dr. Ron du Preez, a South African academic in America, collected and edited all the material presented for an excellent book collection

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entitled *Prophetic Principles: Crucial Exegetical, Theological, Historical and Practical Insights*, published in September 2007. Audio CDs are also available from the American Christian Ministries. Edwin's contribution covers about 100 pages, a third, of this publication.

However, what was to have been the last chapter of *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* did not appear in it. Instead, it became the genesis for Edwin's third work on prophecy, which he is completing now. *Adventists Affirm*, a self-supporting conservative ministry, wants to publish it later this year. Entitled *The Truth About 666*, it is being created with the help of stunningly effective researchers and other assistants. Amazingly, one of these men lives within driving distance of twenty college libraries. From rare book collections, databases, Internet, and other sources, he is amassing amazing photographic images from old books and manuscripts, in some cases going back many centuries. Much of this material was not at the disposal of even Froom more than half a century ago.

Just working on this new book has provided two more spin-offs. The large Southern Union Conference flew Edwin to Daytona Beach, Florida, for a seminar at its 2008 ministerial convention. Paying my own expenses, I also went along. His lecture to some seventy ministers and other interested people on January 9 was on "Defusing the 666 Prophetic Crisis." This vindicated Uriah Smith and the time-tested Historicist explanation about *Vicarius Filii Dei* = 666, refuting the more recent idealist interpretations, which deny that this title is the name referred to in Rev. 13:17, 18. The Daytona Beach lectures were due to appear on the Southern Union Conference web site.

Edwin was also flown up for five presentations at the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference camp meeting during the last week of May 2008. I tagged along at my expense.

Now the heat is truly on, because of time constraints and a mass of material still awaiting incorporation in a three-volume work entitled *The Truth About 666*. Edwin—who next March will be 80—is getting a bit weary after working so hard for so long. *Adventists Affirm* editor and members of their board are in a hurry. And so your prayers are kindly solicited. At the same time, we are truly humbled to see how God has led since He knew, of course, what would happen and was looking for somebody to stand in the breach. We pray He will not be disappointed. Nothing in our wildest dreams could have prepared us for such an amazing journey.