

DF 826

Policy of the Ellen G. White Estate
Concerning the
Care of and Access Given to E. G. White Manuscript
Materials which may be in the Libraries at Institutional
Centers*

Recognition of established points:

Points we recognize--

1. That there resides in certain libraries at denominational centers, E. G. White manuscript materials aggregating, in some cases, several hundred pages.
2. That these documents are copies of E. G. White materials in the White Publications' vault, and such collections in most cases, contain nothing in addition to what is housed in the White Estate vaults in Washington and Berrien Springs.
3. That these communications sent out by Ellen White or her staff are the rightful property of the institutions who hold them, to dispose of or to handle as they may choose with the exception of the right to give general release to or to publish.
4. That any unreleased portions of these manuscripts are under the author's copyright which resides with the White Estate Trustees.
5. That portions of these manuscripts have been printed in pamphlets and tracts, and portions have been included in mimeographed collections issued through the years, and these portions are therefore, for all practical purposes, in the public domain, even though no formal action may have been taken releasing them.

*Note: What follows is an adaptation of policies developed by the White Trustees and the officers of the General Conference on May 1, 1957, to guide in the care of a collection of E. G. White manuscript materials in the historical section of the Loma Linda Library.

6. That libraries holding such collections recognize the unique responsibility of being in possession of E. G. White manuscript documents.

Recommendation regarding handling the documents.

In the following recommendations concerning the handling and use of the E. G. White manuscript materials at libraries in institutional centers, the Trustees have taken into consideration the fact that these collections have for many years been out of our hands, and no small portion of these have been distributed in one form or another and certain limited access has been given to portions of the collection.

Any action, looking toward withdrawing these collections from use, or forbidding access to them could lead to misunderstandings and problems larger than those which may be encountered in an endeavor to guide in the care and use of these documents in such a manner as to safeguard the interests of the work and the memory of individuals whose names may appear in some of the documents of the collection.

It is recognized also that it is proper that these documents shall be studied, both by the institutional staff members and by such of the students as may be able to find time for such study, thus broadening the influence of the counsels given. Therefore, we would recommend

1. That the librarian of the institution where such items may be held, with the Secretary of the Ellen G. White Publications shall, at the earliest time consistent with the conduct of the work, go through the collection of E. G. White materials, lifting out manuscripts and letters of a highly personal character, or those which deal intimately with the experience of individuals, or might otherwise create embarrassment. These particular documents shall be placed in a locked file, access to which shall be given only on a mutual understanding between the librarian

and the Trustees. The White Estate feels that all things considered, that a better procedure and one relieving all embarrassment would be to send all such confidential documents to the White Estate. Some have followed this course.

2. That the remainder--the large body of materials in such collections be made available for reading in the library with a printed notice given to the reader worded somewhat as follows:

"You are privileged to read at length from the E. G. White letters and manuscripts here on file.

"You are not at liberty, however, to copy and circulate portions which might be lifted out of these documents, for often brief excerpts drawn in this way create wrong understandings, and they may be picked up by those who have never read the material in its proper context, or by those who would use certain sentences for critical purposes.

"This restriction is in harmony with Mrs. White's declaration on this point as follows:

"'Many from among our own people are writing to me, asking with earnest determination the privilege of using my writings to give force to certain subjects which they wish to present to the people in such a way as to leave a deep impression upon them. It is true that there is a reason why some of these matters should be presented; but I would not venture to give my approval in using the testimonies in this way, or to sanction the placing of matter which is good in itself in the way which they propose.

"'The persons who make these propositions, for aught I know, may be able to conduct the enterprise of which they write in a wise manner; but nevertheless I dare not give the least license for using my writings in the manner which they propose. In taking account of such an enterprise, there are many things that must come into consideration; for in using the testimonies to bolster up some subject which may impress the mind of the author, the extracts may give a different impression than that which they would were they read in their original connection.'--The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies for the Church, p. 26.

"If statements from these manuscripts are desired for such use as would put them in general circulation, request for such may be placed with the librarian, who will take the matter up with the White Trustees, who were designated by Mrs. White to hold the author's copyright in her unpublished writings."

3. When matter is desired for general use or publication, the request for the use of such material shall be sent forward by the librarian to the Trustees to be processed in the regular manner. These requests shall be accompanied by information as to the anticipated use of the material desired.

4. That at as early a date as is consistent with his duties, the Secretary of the White Estate shall spend whatever time is necessary at the library where such documents are held to review the files and in collaboration with the librarian make such separation of the documents as is deemed advisable, or working from lists of documents, handle the matter by correspondence from the Washington office.

Ellen G. White Publications
Washington, D. C.
June 3, 1965