A. The origin of authority:

- **Divine authority**
  - During his early years, Moses was instructed by his mother in the ways of God (Exodus 2:8-10). Until he turned 40, he received cultural, political, and military instruction in Pharaoh's palace. He spent the next 40 years in the desert, learning from God in the humble environment of pastoral life. When God deemed Moses ready, He sent him as a prophet to speak to Israel and to Pharaoh (Exodus 3:1-2, 10).
  - Since Moses did not feel able to speak to them directly, God appointed Aaron as his "prophet" (Ex. 4:14-16). This is an example of how God's revelation works through prophets:
    (1) Moses ➔speaks to Aaron. ➔Aaron delivers the message to the people.
    (2) God ➔speaks to the Prophet. ➔The prophet delivers the message to the people.
  - Who gave authority to the message, Moses or Aaron? Who gives authority to the message, God or the prophet?
- **The authority of Jesus**
  - Everyone recognized that Jesus spoke with authority, even his enemies (Lk. 4:32). When, in an attempt to trap him, they asked him who gave him that authority, he refused to answer (Mt. 21:23-27).
  - But we know the answer. Jesus has authority as Creator and Savior (John 1:3; Romans 3:24). However, the authority he exercised during his ministry came directly from the Father (John 17:1-2).
  - What did Jesus' authority consist of, part of which he also granted to his disciples?
    (1) To teach (Luke 4:32)
    (2) Forgiving sins (Mark 2:10-11)
    (3) Casting out demons (Luke 4:36)
    (4) Understanding the thoughts of others (John 2:24-25)
    (5) Judge (John 5:27)
    (6) To give eternal life (John 17:2)
- **The authority of the Bible**
  - As the word of God transmitted through his prophets, the Bible is invested with all the authority of God.
    (1) It tells us where we come from and where we are going
    (2) It is the means that God uses to communicate with us
    (3) It reveals to us the character and will of God
    (4) It teaches us the divine purpose for our lives
    (5) It contains the truth
    (6) It helps us make the right decisions
    (7) It is the foundation of the Christian worldview
    (8) It is the rule of faith upon which all doctrine is based
  - Reading the Bible to ridicule it, to look for flaws in it, or a lack of scientific rigor, or to try to make it harmonize with our ideas, will have the same effect as ignoring it, not dedicating time to it, or not applying its teachings to our lives: the loss of eternal life.
  - But for those of us who are willing to accept his message, he has the power to convert our hearts and give us eternal life (Heb. 4:12; 1P. 1:23-25).

B. The relevance of the prophets:

- **Relevance in the Church**
  - Hosea highlights the role of the prophetic gift bestowed upon Moses (Hos. 12:13). Thanks to this gift, he was able to lead Israel out of Egypt; guide them on their journey to Canaan; resolve the problems that arose; and organize the people politically and religiously.
  - After Moses, through prophets like Deborah and Jahaziel, God continued to use the prophetic gift to guide Israel, resolve its problems, and organize it politically and religiously. Elisha, for example, intervened in a military campaign and achieved peace between Israel and Syria.
  - In the New Testament, prophets also played an important role in the organization and growth of the church (Acts 13:1-3).
  - God continues to use the prophetic gift today to guide His church in these last days.
- **Relevance of non-canonical prophets**
  - A canonical prophet is one who wrote a book of the Bible (like Moses). Unlike these, the messages of non-canonical prophets are only known to us when their words were recorded by others. Some of these prophets also wrote books, but they were not added to the biblical canon (2 Chronicles 9:29).
  - However, the authority and relevance of God's message transmitted by the non-canonical prophets is the same as that of the canonical prophets (according to Luke 7:28, the greatest of the prophets was not canonical).
  - The Bible indicates that there will continue to be prophets until Christ returns (Joel 2:28-32; Eph. 4:11-16). These prophets can never be canonical—since the Bible canon is already closed—but their authority is not diminished by this.

APPENDIX: AUTHORITY AND RELEVANCE OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Ellen G. White is included in the group of post-biblical and non-canonical prophets. Like the other prophets who preceded her, her authority comes from God and is subject to biblical authority.

In addition to expanding on some biblical themes (for example, the conflict between good and evil), his message deals with issues that are especially relevant to our times (the danger of the union between church and state, the mark of the beast, education, or health).

His writings have helped many to change their lifestyle and, therefore, to experience a better life.

Although Ellen G. White's writings are not in the Bible, God has used them to guide believers living in the last days of earth's history.