



General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter

An informative publication for members of the General Conference Executive Committee as a service through the office of the Chair

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2021

Sometimes I am asked the following questions: Do we as Seventh-day Adventist provide room for the so called “new light?” Do we provide space for a new interpretation of some Scriptural passages? Do we believe in “progressive revelation?”

To answer these questions, one needs first to clarify what is understood by phrases like “new light”, “new interpretation”, and “progressive revelation.” If these phrases are rightly comprehended, I would answer all these questions with a firm “Yes.”

It is of utmost importance to keep in mind that the Bible *is* the Word of God. The Holy Spirit has inspired, guided, and protected the Word of God. The same Holy Spirit was and is at work today guiding a sincere Bible student. The fundamental principle that we always need to keep in our minds is that the Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself! He will never reveal something today and then tomorrow reveal something contradicting the revelation from yesterday. Yes, He will lead us constantly to a better, more fuller understanding of the Scriptures, but the “new light” will not contradict or invalidate what He revealed previously. The “new light” from the Holy Spirit will build upon, enlarge, and deepen our understanding of the revelation from yesterday. Let’s be humble enough and maintain a teachable spirit.

Let’s follow the Holy Spirits leading!

ARTUR STELE
GENERAL VICE PRESIDENT
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS



EDITORIAL



THE SAME OLD WHINE (OF BABYLON)

BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN, EDITOR, ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

A recent spate of anti-Adventist eschatology has been infecting cyberspace. It’s the same old whine (of Babylon), only coming from among us:

Rome is no longer an important player; Sunday persecution will never arise; our end-time scenario is from Ellen White, not the Bible; and we must stop scaring people.

Let’s take a look.

For starters, Rome—no longer a player?

In Daniel 2, right after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 2:39), the iron in the legs of the statue, and the iron and the clay in its feet and toes (verses 33, 34, 39-43), represent the last earthly

empire, which remains until a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” (verse 45) destroys the earth and God establishes His eternal kingdom (verse 44).

In Daniel 7, after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 7:6), the fourth beast with its little horn (verses 7, 8, 19-21) represents the final earthly empire, which remains until God establishes His eternal kingdom: “The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (verse 18).

In Daniel 8, after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 8:8, 21, 22), the little horn represents the last earthly empire (verses 9-11, 22-25),

which exists until, as in Daniel 2, it's supernaturally destroyed "without hand" (verse 25, KJV) at "the time of the end" (verse 17).

What power, which also plays a major role in the New Testament, arises after ancient Greece and remains to our day (as it must if destroyed at the end)? This same power also persecuted God's people (Dan. 7:21), was blasphemous (verse 20), exalted itself against "the Prince of the host" (Dan. 8:11), and would "think to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25, KJV). So unless the critics can identify another major power that arises after ancient Greece, that persecuted God's people, that thought "to change times and laws," and that endures to our day—the Adventist position on Rome remains the only viable option.

And that option becomes even more viable, thanks to Revelation 13, which references the same imagery that Daniel 7 used to represent the final earthly power, the one that arose after ancient Greece and remains until supernaturally destroyed at the end of the world. In other words, Rome—which now, in Revelation, is depicted as a major end-time player, a beast (Rev. 13:1-11), the same beast behind the infamous and apocalyptic "mark of the beast" (Rev. 16:2).

Of course, the Adventist "traditional" interpretation of the "mark of the beast" and end-time persecution is also derided.

Let's see

Revelation depicts final events as centering on worship: worship either of the beast and its image (Rev. 14:9) or worship of God, the Creator, the One who "made

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7, KJV)—language directly from the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:10). This is the one commandment that shows why we should worship God—because He is the Creator—and it's the same commandment that Rome sought to change, replacing God's decree (the seventh day) with man's (the first). "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."*

Meanwhile, the Lord's followers—who are depicted, twice, as keeping "the commandments of God" (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)—worship God because, as the Creator (and also our Redeemer), He alone is worthy of worship (Rev. 5:9). And no more foundational symbol of Him as our Creator exists than the seventh-day Sabbath, which (again) the beast power sought to change. For an earthly power to try to change, in a sense to usurp, the most basic sign of the most basic doctrine, creation, is to attempt to usurp the Lord's authority at the most basic level possible: God as Creator. The only level more basic is God Himself, and because no entity, heavenly or earthly, can get to Him, it instead gets as close as possible: to the foundation sign of Him as Creator—the seventh-day Sabbath.

But persecution over the Sabbath?

In Matthew 12, after Jesus healed on the Sabbath the man with a withered hand (Matt. 12:9-13), how did the religious leaders respond? "But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus" (verse 14, NIV).

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Death because of the seventh-day Sabbath? In John 5:1-16, after another miraculous healing on the seventh day, the leaders “persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath” (John 5:16).

Death because of human tradition (nothing in the Bible forbade healing on Sabbath, just as nothing in the Bible has put Sunday in place of Sabbath) versus the seventh-day Sabbath? Though the specific issue here with Jesus isn’t the same as in final events, it’s close enough: human law versus God’s, and in both the contested law centers on the biblical Sabbath.

It’s hard, then, to see how the issue of worshipping either the Creator, or worshipping the beast and its image, won’t be over the one commandment that points to God as Creator and that reveals why we should worship Him—the exact commandment that the beast power usurped.

And, as far as using Ellen White to prove our position on the mark of the beast . . . Where did I quote her above?

Finally, what about our scaring people with those ferocious beasts and warnings about persecution and death decrees? Noah probably heard something similar. Maybe someone said to Malachi: *Can’t you focus more on Yahweh’s love instead of giving such nasty warnings like: “Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it” (Mal. 2:3, KJV)?* And what about the wars, rumors of wars, famine, pestilence, lawlessness, persecution, “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:8)?

Excuse us—if you must—for preaching the mark of the beast. It’s an integral part of the three angels’ messages and the “everlasting gospel” to be proclaimed by God’s end-time people. After all, the one

who gets it will only “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation” (Rev. 14:10). We can’t, without warning about the events that precede it, faithfully proclaim the second coming of Jesus.

It’s one thing for our end-time message to be attacked from without. But from within? We’d be naive to expect otherwise. Unfortunately.

*Peter Geiermann, *The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (Rockford, Ill: Tan Books and Publishers, 1977), p. 50.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND END TIME EVENTS

BIBLICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Questions have come to the Biblical Research Institute regarding the Seventh-day Adventist position on the Mark of the Beast in relation to Sunday observance, the conditionality of prophecy, and pertinent statements by Ellen G. White. The following questions summarize the main concerns that have been brought to our attention, which have been answered briefly.

1

Since neither Sabbath nor Sunday are specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation, how can the mark of the beast involve a day of worship or a law requiring the observance of Sunday?

The mark of the beast is mentioned seven times in Revelation (13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). Four of these appear in its central vision (Rev. 12-14), which is introduced by a view of the ark of the covenant containing the ten commandments (Rev. 11:19). God's remnant people are identified as those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). Immediately after this, John describes two beasts which persecute God's church: (1) "a beast rising up out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1) and (2) "another beast coming up out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11). The first beast commands false worship and his persecuting activity resembles that of the "little horn" of Daniel 7 that would "intend to change

times and law" (Dan 7:25) and persecutes God's people for 1260 days (Rev. 13:4, 8). The connection with Daniel's prophecy shows that the false worship involves an attempt to change God's "times" and His ten commandment law. The one commandment of the ten dealing with time is the fourth—to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy.

Historically, the attempt to change the day of worship has been perpetrated by the papacy of Rome which reveres Sunday as the day of rest instead of Saturday, the biblical Sabbath. The fact that the second beast in Revelation 13, representing the United States of America, exercises the same authority as the first beast (Rev. 13:12) and cooperates with the first beast to enforce false worship

shows that Sunday will be an important distinguishing mark of those who worship the beast and his image in contrast to God's remnant people who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). Their obedience includes keeping the seventh day holy because they heed the call to "worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" (Rev. 14:7; see Exod. 20:11). These will receive the seal of God (Rev. 7:4; 14:1) while those who reject this call and reverence Sunday, the mark of the beast's authority, are described as part of Babylon and receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:8-11). The final test, then, is over true or false worship based either on obedience to God's law, including the Sabbath, or a man-made day of worship, Sunday.

2

What is the number of the beast and how does it relate to the mark of the beast?

In the Bible the number of the beast is mentioned in Revelation 13:17-18: “No one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man [anthrōpou = of a human being]: His number is 666.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have an official position on this question but there are two major views among us on the number of

the beast, 666, in Revelation 13:17, 18. Some interpret it as a cryptic reference to the papal title Vicarius Filii Dei, but we are not told that 666 is the added numerical value of the letters in such a designation. Others view it as a triple six indicative of a Satanic trinity. They point out that the phrase “it is the number of a man” (Rev. 13:18, NIV) could be translated “it is the number of humanity,” that is, of humans separated from God. This number (six used three times) would then symbolize intense rebellion and total

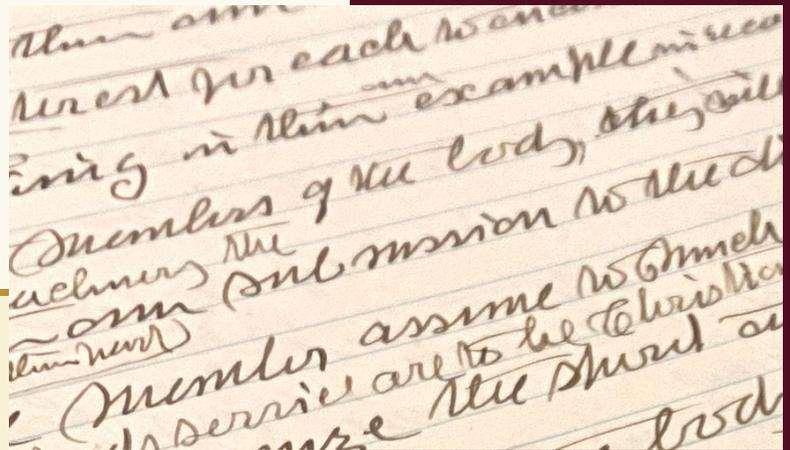
independence from God. The Greek text, however, is literally 600 + 60 + 6, not three sixes or a triple six. Recognizing this, many Seventh-day Adventists continue to associate the number of the beast with the Papal title Vicarius Filii Dei, and recent research provides good historical evidence for connecting 666 with that title than was previously recognized. In any case, there are many evidences from the text and from history to identify the first beast of Revelation 13 with the papacy regardless of how 666 is understood.

3

In the Bible are conditional and unconditional prophecies. How could Ellen G. White’s writings be understood in light of this? Can the interpretation be conditional if the apocalyptic prophecy is unconditional?

The Old Testament classical prophecies focus primarily on the prophet’s own time and historical context, though they may also include a wider, cosmic perspective that reaches to the end-time “day of the Lord” (see, for example, Isa. 2:12; 13:9; Joel 2:21). Classical prophecies, given as they were in the context of God’s covenant with Israel may contain conditional elements whose fulfillment depended on Israel’s response (see Deut. 28). Similar to canonical prophets, Ellen G.

White’s testimonies regarding individuals and institutions may have only a local, conditional application since their fulfillment often depended on the response or decision of those involved. Nevertheless, as with Scripture, the underlying principles are of continuing application. Ellen White’s end-time descriptions, on the other hand, should be understood in an eschatological



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context based as they are on biblical apocalyptic prophecy as well as on visions she herself received from God. These prophetic messages interpret apocalyptic prophecy, which is by its very nature unconditional and focuses on the resolution of the great controversy. Since Ellen G. White's prophetic messages reflect this end-time context and not the local context at the time of writing, they should be understood as unconditional prophecies—like the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that ground her prophetic outlook.



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

4

Did Ellen G. White's views on the Papacy and Protestantism in connection with the mark of the beast change through the years?

There is no real change in Ellen G. White's views on the Papacy and Protestantism and their enforcement of the mark of the beast. In order to appreciate her later statements, it is helpful to notice her earlier ones. The earliest statement of Ellen G. White regarding Catholics and Protestants as persecuting powers comes from 1850, in which, based on Revelation 13 and 17, the papacy is described as "the mother of harlots" and Protestants as "her daughters." Several phases of persecution are described:

1) the papacy's "day . . . is past" refers to the 1,260 years of papal supremacy when she persecuted God's people;

2) Protestants, in harmony with the second angel's message (Rev. 14:8), would begin to persecute them

also. That Ellen White did not consider the papacy's persecuting work to be over is made clear in succeeding paragraphs, which indicate additional phases of persecution:

3) Protestant churches, together with the Catholic church, would come against those who "keep the Sabbath and disregard Sunday," and

4) the Catholic church would lend its influence to Protestants in the United States to destroy God's people.

Clearly, according to Ellen White, Catholics and Protestants will be colluding together over a considerable period of time in persecuting God's people.

The next major statement, published in 1884, elaborates on this initial 1850 statement, and makes clear that the focus on

the papacy's time being "past" is to show that the second angel's message of Babylon being fallen refers specifically to apostate Protestantism: "The word of God teaches that these scenes [of persecution during the period of papal supremacy] are to be repeated as papists and Protestants shall unite for the exaltation of the Sunday."

In conclusion, Ellen G. White's position regarding the papacy and its promotion of Sunday sacredness remained consistent. Later statements, including those published in the various editions of *The Great Controversy*, are an elaboration of her earliest statement, not a change of position. For example, in 1900, she wrote, "When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday."

5

Do Seventh-day Adventists continue to affirm the end-time scenario found within the writings of Ellen G. White?

In harmony with the reference to the testimony of Jesus functioning at the end of world history (Rev. 12:17), Seventh-day Adventists recognize Ellen G. White as a messenger of the

Lord and continue to affirm that her writings are given to the remnant church as an inspired guide for these last days and are especially helpful in understanding Bible prophecies

concerning final events. As answers to these questions show, we believe that her interpretations of prophecy are sound and remain relevant and instructive for the church.

6

Is the Adventist interpretation of Revelation 13 anti-Catholic?

Ellen G. White recognizes that God’s children are present in all denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church. In Manuscript 14, 1887, par. 4, she says: “We should not create a prejudice in their [Catholics’] minds unnecessarily, by making a raid upon them. . . . From that which God has shown me, a great number will be saved from among the Catholics.” And in another statement reported in *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 9, 243, she says: “Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians, and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf.” Such statements make it very clear that Ellen G. White was



not by any means anti-Catholic. That said, it bears noting that she stood in the line of the Reformation. She viewed the Catholic doctrinal system—the Mass and other sacraments—as inconsistent with faith in Christ and the Sola Scriptura principle. Besides this, she understood that the authority structure of the Roman Catholic Church stands in direct opposition to the Bible and its authority. Her understanding of Revelation 13 is consistent with Adventist theology and with the historicist interpretation of other apocalyptic prophecies in Daniel and Revelation.

7

Some have conjectured that the Bible and Ellen G. White do not really support the Seventh-day Adventist understanding that Sabbath versus Sunday worship will be an issue in the end times. Is there recent evidence that would support the Adventist understanding?

First of all, we should be very cautious when dealing with unfulfilled Bible prophecy and resist the temptation to interpret Scripture through the lens of the latest newspaper headlines. We should follow sound principles of Biblical interpretation and give careful attention to the

Biblical text.

The suggestion that statements by Ellen G. White about the Roman Catholic Church do not reflect the reality after Vatican II, that they were conditioned by the circumstances of her time and inapplicable to our present

situation, requires closer scrutiny.

While Vatican II has led to more openness by the Roman Church toward other religious groups, there has been no change of doctrinal substance, including its position on the importance of Sunday worship. In fact,



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the Adventist interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and the statements of Ellen G. White in this regard appear increasingly plausible. For example, Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, section 67, states that: “Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy” and indicates they will refrain “from work and activities which are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord’s Day.”

More recently, Pope Francis has stated in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’*, section 13, “the urgent challenge to protect

our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.” This development, according to Pope Francis, includes the restoration of spiritual life, having the Eucharist at its center and Sunday as a universal day to rest and experience that restoration. The importance of Sunday worship and the obligation to participate in the Mass on Sunday are also emphasized in the most recent Catholic catechism: “Every Christian should avoid making

unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord’s Day. . . . In spite of economic constraints, public authorities should ensure citizens a time intended for rest and divine worship. Employers have a similar obligation toward their employees” (sec. 2187).

The unifying role of Sunday is recognized also by Orthodox leaders. In a recent issue of *Sunday Magazine* (Spring 2015), the Orthodox Rev. Dr. Demetrios E. Tonia, described “Sunday as a Mark of Christian Unity” (pp. 6-7). It is therefore not surprising that politicians urge some of these ideas and have even called for mandatory church attendance on Sunday and stricter Sunday laws and not only in the United States. The powerful European Sunday Alliance is pushing for stricter Sunday laws in the countries of the European Union.

While these developments are signs of the times and deserve our careful attention, they might not be the final fulfillment of the end-time scenario that is provided in Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. However, they certainly provide a framework in which these things can credibly take place in a relatively short time.

CONCLUSION

As Seventh-day Adventists, our mission is to preach the everlasting gospel to the world, which centers in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice on the cross, the free gift of His righteousness, and His intercessory and judgment ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Our special, end time task focuses on the

proclamation of the three angels’ messages to prepare people for His soon coming. Integral to these messages is our prophetic understanding of last day events.

While we must not become entangled in speculations that distract us from that mission, current events do tend to confirm our understanding. We are convinced that God’s prophetic messages, as revealed in the



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Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, are correct and provide an increasingly plausible scenario as we approach final events that have been divinely revealed, even if we cannot determine precisely how soon those events will come.

Our focus should remain on the mission of the church, strengthening the family, becoming involved in outreach, and reflecting Jesus in our life. As world conditions develop and we continue to study the prophecies of the Bible for guidance, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation, our understanding of last day events will become clearer. The writings of Ellen G. White are also an important resource that shed light on these prophecies.

For more information on these and other important subjects, the reader may find the section on materials at the BRI website helpful: <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org>. (This document may be accessed directly from the BRI website by clicking [here](#).)

¹For a detailed discussion of what 666 means, including a thorough overview of the various interpretations through history, see Edwin de Kock, “The Number of the Beast,” in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5FP8> (accessed May 22, 2021), from which much of this material is drawn.

²Ellen G. White, Ms 15, 1850, pars. 5-7, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/2893.1#10> (accessed June 24, 2021).

³Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 233, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/140.913#926> (accessed June 24, 2021), 396, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/140.1513#1582> (accessed June 24, 2021). For a more detailed biblical explanation of these statements, see “Appendix,” n. 8 (*ibid.*, 501-504), <https://m.>



A Brief Statement from the Ellen G. White Estate Regarding the Consistency of Ellen White's Statements on End-Time Events

The Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Three Angels' Messages—including the centrality of the gospel in its end-time proclamation, the Sabbath as the final expression of loyalty to the Creator, the final investigative judgment that leads to the Loud Cry and the close of probation, Satan's counterfeit worship and enforcement of Sunday worship—are all consistent with Bible teaching and Ellen White's writings.

Adventist understanding of the Three Angels' Messages following 1844 unfolded during the 1840s and 1850s. It followed a pattern of Scriptural study with confirmation and practical enrichment from Ellen White's visions. A careful study of this history continuing throughout Ellen White's lifetime reveals a consistency regarding the major issues, including the role of the Papacy, Sunday

observance, and the Mark of the Beast.

Her clearest statements which are in harmony with her earlier views are found in the 1911 edition of *The Great Controversy*, published four years before her death.

“Both the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,’ and the first angel's message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come,’ pointed to Christ's ministration in the most holy place, to the investigative judgment, and not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of His people and the destruction of the wicked” (1911 GC 424). She connected the earlier and later Seventh-day Adventist views on all three angels in Revelation 14 with these words: “The first and second messages

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egwwritings.org/en/book/140.1968#2014 (accessed June 24, 2021).

⁴Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, 224, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/39.1390#1458> (accessed June 24, 2021).

⁵See the chapters in Frank M. Hasel, ed., *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute/Review & Herald Academic, 2020).

⁶For a careful and well documented historical and theological analysis of the recent developments of the Roman Catholic Church see the two articles by Hans Heinz, “Roman Catholicism: Continuity and Change” *Reflections: The BRI Newsletter*, vol. 59 (July 2017): 1-11 and Hans Heinz, “The Roman Catholic Church—Continuity and Change: The Pontificate of John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis” *Reflections: The BRI Newsletter*, vol. 64 (October 2018): 1-7.

⁷https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/la/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html (accessed: 05-22-2021).

⁸Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, section 2187. See also sections 2176, 2177, 2182, and 2184.

⁹<http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/site/home> (accessed: 05-22-2021). According to their self-description “The European Sunday Alliance is a network of national Sunday Alliances, trade unions, civil society organizations, and religious communities, committed to raise awareness of the unique value of synchronized free time for our European societies. Sunday and, more general, decent working hours, are the focus of our campaigns.” Associated with the European Sunday Alliance are some 83-member organizations all over Europe as well as 25 supporting organizations. On the increasing influence of the Papacy in Europe, see Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).



were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed” (Ms. 32, 1896).

Ellen White was very clear on the meaning of the seal of God and the mark of the beast: “The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God” (1911 GC 605).

While it is necessary to refrain from being too

specific about how the final events will unfold there has been consistent biblical and Ellen White clarity on the major issues regarding the role of the Sabbath and Satan’s counterfeit. We would do well to heed Jehoshaphat’s counsel from long ago, “Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper” (2 Chron. 20:20, NKJV).

“There is no question based on the evidence that Ellen White maintained a continuity of understanding and did not change her position,” states Merlin Burt, Director of the Ellen G. White Estate. “It is Bible based and confirmed and enriched by her visions.” For a more detailed article on this topic, see “A Brief Overview of the Unfolding Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Three Angels’ Messages in Connection with Revelation 13 and 18 and Ellen White’s Role” by Merlin D. Burt.



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

UNIQUE PHOTOS FROM ELLEN G. WHITE'S LIFE REVEALED

The only known photograph of Ellen G. White inside her home, "Elmshaven," in St. Helena, California, was recently made public when published in a book entitled *Angwin and Howell Mountain*, by Katharine Van Arsdale, special collections librarian at the Pacific Union College (PUC) Nelson Library in California. The photo,



which shows Ellen White seated at her writing desk in her writing room at Elmshaven, is part of the Taylor Family Collection donated to the PUC Library's

Special Collections. The photo is undated, but it is believed to have been taken around 1905. For a full story about the picture and a link to download it, click [here](#).

Included in the collection was another previously unknown photo of some of Ellen White's workers gathered on the lawn at Elmshaven. Pictured are: Sara McEnterfer, Helen Graham, Sarah Peck, Paul and Ethel Mason, and Minnie Hawkins Crisler. *ECN* is happy to publish this photo for the first time. Can you find the cat?



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation.

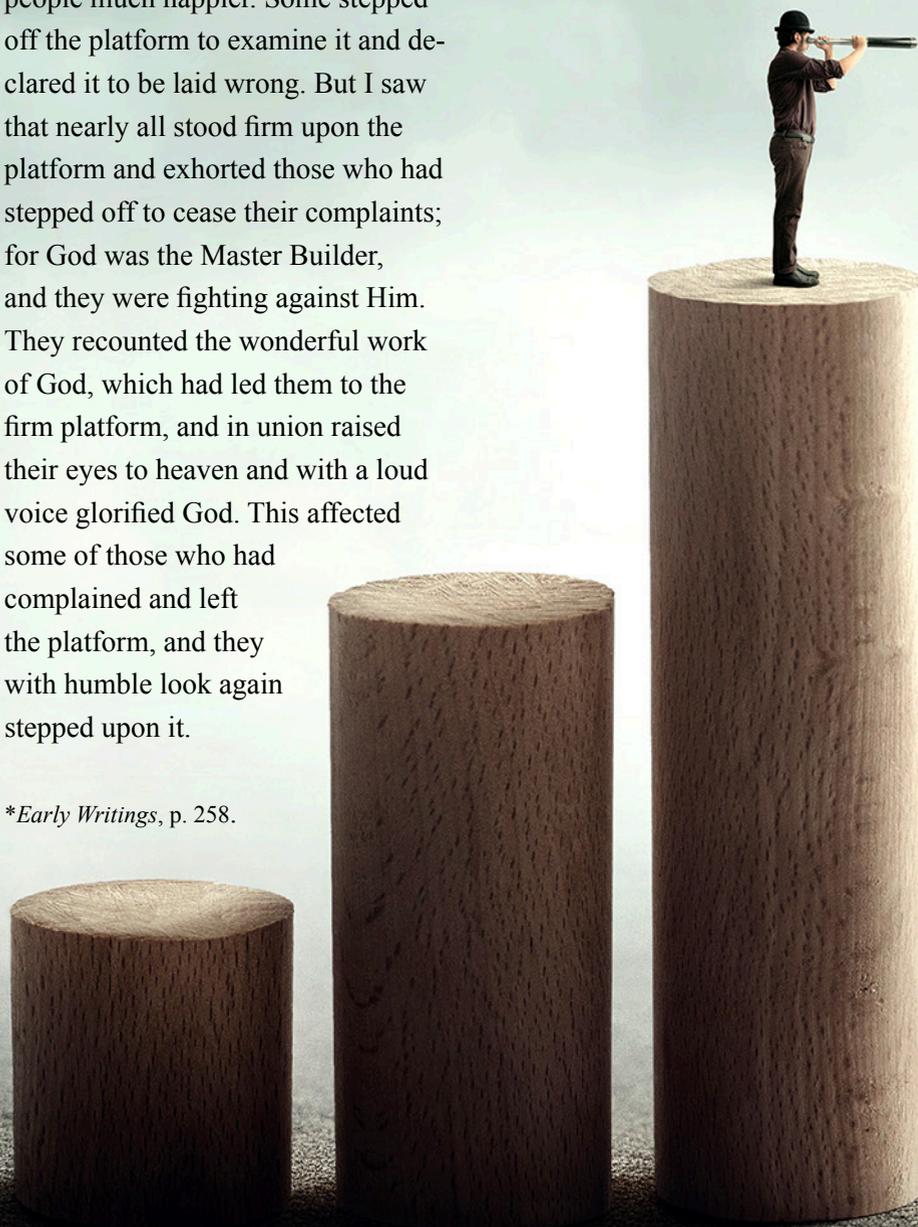
I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received."

I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.

I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing im-

mediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it.

**Early Writings, p. 258.*



All life is a precious gift from a loving and grace-filled God (Gen. 2:7). Healthy, biblical, lifestyle principles are *foundational* to the Seventh-day Adventist health message and germane to who we are, and as Seventh-day Adventist leaders, we *know* how we should live. Sometimes, however, knowledge does not equate into *practice*. As we move forward, I encourage you to live wisely beyond the pandemic, by following the health principles we all know well. “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2, NKJV).

FACTORS AFFECTING IMMUNITY

- Age
- Pregnancy
- Lack of sleep
- Nutrition
- Obesity and metabolic syndrome
- Inactivity
- Stress
- Lack of immunization

OPTIMAL IMMUNE HEALTH

- Nutrition
- More veggies, wide variety
- Plenty of fruits
- Variety of whole grains
- Healthy plant proteins
- Healthy fats
- Choose unrefined foods



ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS AND IMMUNITY

- Needed for normal development of the immune system
- Helps keep immune system healthy
- Helps with the repair of DNA
- Stimulates production/activity of immune cells
- Antioxidant functions



A balanced vegetarian diet supplies all these needed nutrients.¹

Zinc	legumes, nuts and seeds, whole grains	Vitamin D	safe exposure to sunshine daily, dairy, certain mushrooms, fortified foods and cereals; supplementation as needed to maintain healthy blood levels (at the discretion of your healthcare provider)
Selenium	Brazil nuts, whole wheat bread, oatmeal, beans and lentils, eggs, sunflower seeds	Vitamin E	almonds, hazelnuts, wheat germ, mangoes, avocados, peanuts, spinach, soy foods, plant oils
Iron	legumes, whole grains, nuts, leafy greens	Vitamin B12	For ovo-lacto vegetarians, dairy used as a condiment(modestly) is a good source. Total vegetarians (vegans) need to take a supplement – plant food is not a source of vitamin B 12
Copper	nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, avocados, leafy greens		
Folic acid	legumes, vegetables, fruits, wheat germ		
Vitamin A	leafy greens, bright-colored vegetables, yellow fruits, eggs		
Vitamin B₆	chickpeas, potatoes, carrots, bananas, edamame, spinach, avocados, green peas, tofu, pistachios		
Vitamin C	fresh fruit, especially citrus, papaya, apples, peaches, fresh vegetables, tomatoes, leafy greens, broccoli		

Note: Supplements should be taken in consultation with your healthcare provider – one should supplement what is deficient, not what can be adequately sourced in a healthy, balanced diet.

LIFESTYLE HABITS

- Exercise daily.
- Liquids: pure, fresh water
- Sunshine: careful, regular exposure
- Rest: seven to eight hours each night
- Fresh air
- Balance/temperance
- Balanced nutrition
- Positive, informed choices
- Optimistic, hopeful outlook
- Integrity
- Positive supportive relationships and connectedness
- Trust in God—foundational

MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

- Know your numbers: weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol
- Act on your numbers
- Regular health checkups, at least annually
- Do not ignore symptoms

WE RECOMMEND WALKING!

Ongoing research yields robust evidence that many health outcomes are improved by walking 8-10,000 steps per day. There is a clear and significant decrease in mortality and improves many health conditions including the prevention and control of diabetes type 2, maintaining weight loss, and delaying/preventing dementia onset.

“There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it the circulation of the blood is greatly improved. . . . Walking in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for diseased bodies, because in this exercise all of the organs of the body are brought into use” (3T 78).



¹“The Nutrition Source: Nutrition and Immunity,” Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/nutrition-and-immunity/>

²Herd immunity is the pre-existing community immunity of approximately 80 percent of individuals as a result of previous infection and/or vaccination.

³From “COVID-19 Vaccines: Addressing Concerns, Offering Counsel,” GC Department of Health Ministries, Biblical Research Institute, Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy and School of Public Health, <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story15816-covid-19-vaccines-addressing-concerns-offering-counsel>

REGARDING COVID IMMUNIZATION

Sanitation, clean water and immunization have been key in improving longevity over the past century. As we witness the global magnitude of the pandemic, the deaths, disability, and long-term COVID-19 effects that are emerging in all age groups, *we are encouraging (NOT mandating) our members to consider responsible immunization and the promotion and facilitation of the development of what is commonly termed herd immunity.*²

“The decision to be immunized or not is the choice of each individual, and should be taken in consultation with one’s health-care provider. Personal research on the subject is important. We ultimately rely on following biblical health practices and the Spirit of Prophecy, and following God’s leading in our lives, which will bring us peace and assurance in our decision making.”³

NEWS: GC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS

On Thursday, July 22, the General Conference Executive Committee met by Zoom. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss and vote on six leadership positions within the world field.

Following a brief worship led by Ted N.C. Wilson, focusing on John 17, a time of prayer was held focusing on various requests coming from executive committee members.

The announcement was made

that the 2021 Annual Council (to be held Oct. 7-13, 2021) will be a “hybrid,” with resident GC executive committee members meeting in person in the GC auditorium in Silver Spring, with all other members connecting virtually. Deep appreciation was also expressed by the chair (Wilson) to the divisions and unions “who have been responding beautifully regarding our January 18 Special GC Session,”

which will include only one item on the agenda—to adjust the constitution to provide for electronic connection for the GC Session scheduled to be held in St. Louis in 2022.

Following announcements, the meeting moved into the main agenda items of filling various leadership positions. The following positions and names were discussed and voted and are effective immediately.



Daniel Kwame Bediako, Associate Director, Biblical Research Institute (BRI)

Daniel K. Bediako, Ph.D., has served as Vice Chancellor/President of Valley View University in Ghana since 2015. Previously, he served as Academic Vice President and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Valley View. He is an associate professor of Old Testament Language and Exegesis with special interest in Biblical Hebrew Textlinguistics. Dr. Bediako has authored five books, forty articles and has presented more than twenty conference papers. He has also edited twelve works, including *The Sabbath in Old Testament and the Intertestamental Period: Implications for Christians in the 21st Century* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2020), *Prosperity Gospel: A Biblical-Theological Evaluation* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2020), and associate-edited the *Andrews Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020). Dr. Bediako has been a member of the Biblical Research Institute Committee (BRICOM) since 2010.



Robyn W. Kajiura, Executive Director, General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS)

Robyn Kajiura has more than 30 years professional experience in the field of auditing. Prior to being elected GCAS Executive Director, she served as GCAS Associate Director with responsibilities for the North America Area operations. In this capacity, she led a team of 80 professional staff and managed a budget of approximately US\$10 million. With a personal background influenced from her time living in India and Australia, Robyn appreciates the importance of cross-cultural understanding and brings to her leadership responsibilities a keen sense for respecting others and building relationships to get things done. In addition to her work in the United States, Robyn has led teams on assignments to Australia, Brazil, India, Russia, and Switzerland.



J. Francois Keet, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, South Pacific Division (SPD)

Francois Keet has much experience in executive financial management in various Seventh-day Adventist entities, as well as in the commercial banking world. Since 2017, he has served as associate treasurer for SPD. Previously, he served as treasurer of the Australian Union Conference (2016), and the Trans-Pacific Union Mission (2006-2015). He was vice-president for finance at Avondale University from 2006-2010, and an audit manager for GCAS from 2003-2005. He has also served in managerial roles for several commercial banks. Originally from South Africa, Keet is a Chartered Accountant, Chartered Financial Analyst and Certified Internal Auditor. He is a committed Seventh-day Adventist who is actively involved in his local Adventist church.



Michael B. Sikuri, Secretary, South Pacific Division (SPD)

Originally from Fiji, Michael Sikuri has most recently served as president of the South New Zealand Conference since 2016. Previously, he served as ministerial secretary and church pastor in that conference. He was in the Trans-Pacific Union Mission from 2009-2014 where he served as HR Director, Family Ministries Director, and Children's Ministries Liaison. He also served in various pastoral/chaplaincy capacities for four years in the Fiji Mission. "My objective as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to lead people to the Lord in whatever capacity the Lord calls my family and I to," states Pastor Sikuri. "My motto [is] to do all to the glory of God and be faithful to the calling placed upon us."



Jennifer Gray Woods, Associate Director, Public Affairs/Religious Liberty (PARL)

Jennifer Gray Woods has served as Associate General Counsel in the Office of General Counsel at the General Conference since 2015 where she has overseen the areas of copyright, trademark, and privacy for the Adventist Church. Previously, she was an attorney in the Office of General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C., where she gained extensive experience in interagency and governmental affairs. She has also worked as an attorney in Los Angeles, California, where she provided complex health care regulatory guidance, litigation assistance, transactional advice and more. Ms. Woods is a graduate of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and holds a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from Harvard Law School.



Ivan H. Omana, Associate Director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM)

Since 2015, Ivan Omana has served as the Assistant Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division, providing support, encouragement, and denominational oversight to more than 300 chaplains in all areas of chaplaincy in the Pacific Union Conference and the North Pacific Union Conference. Previously, he served as senior chaplain at Florida Hospital Kissimmee (2002-2015), and as a chaplain in Adventist Care Centers (2000-2002). During the 1990s, Omana was as a pastor in the Central West Venezuelan Conference, where he also served as the official translator for every major evangelistic and ecclesiastical event.

FROM DOGS TO JESUS*

BY RICKY OLIVERAS, OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION

Dogs and their owners in Ecuador’s capital city, Quito, are thrilled that One Year in Mission volunteers have become part of their community. The young volunteers went to the city to share the love of Jesus—and surprisingly, this includes taking care of dogs.

The story began when a Global Mission pioneer couple, Christian and Maribel, moved into the community and found no Adventists living there.

“We wanted to reach a group of professional people who, for various reasons, haven’t included the church in their hearts and lives,” Christian said.

In this upper-middle-class neighborhood, people seemed to have everything they needed, like nice houses and cars.

“The challenge in this place is that people don’t open their hearts easily,” Maribel said. “First, we wanted them to open the doors to their homes.”

Christian and Maribel started by finding out what the people truly needed. Since this was a large community, they recruited a team of One Year in Mission volunteers to help them.

“There were quite a few people who wanted their dogs to be walked,” Christian said, “and the One Year in Mission team helped with this. . . . They even held a health fair for pets!”

By taking care of the dogs, the team got to know the owners.

“Our objective is to reach people by making friends, visiting them, and going to the park with them,” Maribel said.

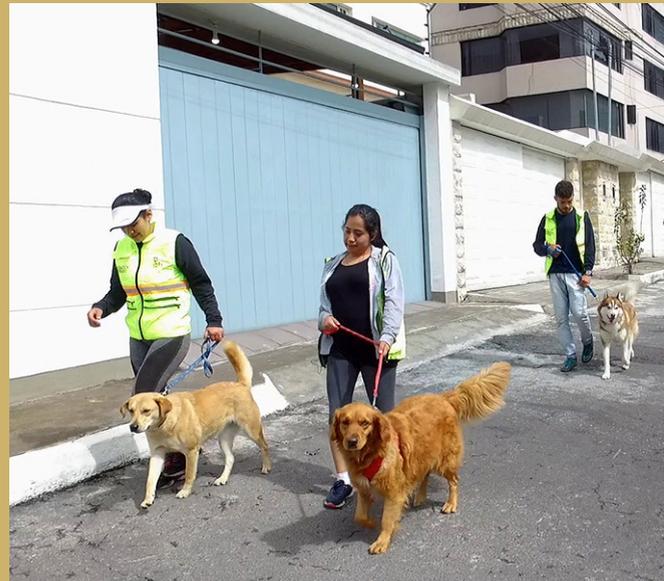
Because of these new friendships, community members started scheduling Bible studies when planning walks for their dogs. Over time, several people gave their hearts to Jesus.

“I feel happy when someone accepts Jesus,” Maribel said. “It’s gratifying to know that they know and believe in a God of hope and love.”

Now, because of walking dogs and building relationships, a new congregation of believers meets each Sabbath and is still growing!



Meet Global Mission Pioneers, Christian and Maribel.



One Year in Mission volunteers helped the community by walking dogs in Quito, Ecuador.



Through walking dogs and building relationships, a new congregation of believers meets each Sabbath.

*This story was first published in *Mission 360*, Vol. 9, No. 1.



THE BACK PAGE

Directions: For more information on an item, click on the corresponding number on the map.

1 The President of the Allegheny East Conference (AEC), Henry J. Fordham, and wife, Sharon Fordham, died tragically in a fire on July 18 at their home in **Douglasville, Pennsylvania**. Elder Fordham had served as AEC president since October 2012 and spent his entire 47-year ministerial career serving the AEC as a teacher, pastor, departmental leader, and administrator. Sharon Fordham dedicated her life to raising her children and grandchildren, and as first lady of the Columbia Union's second largest conference, she was instrumental in supporting her husband's ministry. Their compassionate, godly leadership had a great impact, and they will be missed by all.

2 More than 23,000 people joined the Adventist church after a coordinated evangelistic event across **Mexico** in June. The special week of "reaping" crowned months of

evangelistic initiatives across the five unions in Mexico. The guest speaker for the closing week was Pastor Alejandro Bullón, whose messages reached an average of 280,000 people each evening, on top of the more than 300,000 on the opening night, thanks to the region's distribution platform systems through the support of Hope Channel Inter-America.

3 Amidst social unrest, Adventists in **Cuba** are living by faith, reports Pastor Aldo Pérez, president of the Cuban Union Conference. "God is sustaining us with His hand, and we solicit the prayers from all our brothers and sisters in Inter-America and around the world, so we don't feel alone, and see God's work in bringing peace and reconciliation to our nation." Although they are experiencing many hardships, God is working miracles among His people, according to Pastor Pérez, who is asking for prayer from the worldwide family of Seventh-day Adventists.

4 Following unprecedented flooding and disaster in the country of **Belgium**, ADRA worked with local authorities and social services to assess needs. On July 19, ADRA mobilized teams of volunteers from various Adventist churches in Belgium to help the victims of the floods in Verviers. In addition to clearing debris and evacuating homes about to collapse, the volunteers also provided comfort and emotional support to the victims. ADRA also deployed a team in Germany following flood damage in that country.

5 Despite the pandemic, youth work has moved steadily forward in the **Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**. Following the worldwide Youth Week of Prayer and Homecoming Sabbath this past Spring, unprecedented numbers of young people decided to be baptized. In the Southern Zambia Union

Conference, the Lusaka Conference baptized more than 1,900 youth. In the Northern Zambia Union Conference, more than 12,000 young people were baptized. Leaders attribute the results to dedicated young people, prioritizing youth participation in the church's mission, and God's intervention.

6 Due to God's blessing and the unconventional efforts of 36 Voice of Youth (VOY) teams of the **Northern Luzon Mission in the Philippines**, 549 people, including 3 pastors from other denominations, were recently baptized following the efforts of the VOY young people. Because of COVID-related restrictions numerous creative outreach methods were used, including limited face-to-face evangelistic meetings, house-to-house visits, radio broadcasts, Google Meet, Facebook Live, and online Bible studies.