



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

JANUARY - MARCH 2025

The Seventh-day Adventist

Church as an end-time prophetic movement has been given the special task of proclaiming the everlasting Gospel found in the three angels' messages. This is one reason why the correct understanding of the end-time prophecies is so important for us. The apocalyptic book of Revelation naturally plays a very significant role in our proclamation of the Gospel. We are often asked, however, if we should not reinterpret our understanding of some of the prophetic passages of the book of Revelation since we are now living in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the centuries many interpreters were tempted to interpret the book of Revelation with, so to speak, a newspaper in their hand. As a result, changes in society, world events, etc., were requiring a new, "fresh" interpretation of the same prophecies.

However, a serious Bible student will recognize very quickly that the book of Revelation can and should be studied in light of the Biblical context, allowing the Bible to interpret itself.

A closer look at the book of Revelation demonstrates the interconnectedness of its prophecies with other prophecies in the Bible. The symbols and images used in Revelation are mostly derived from the Old Testament, which proves the book cannot be interpreted in isolation from the rest of the Bible.

Let us continue to be faithful students of the apocalyptic prophecies, studying them in the light of the Biblical context.

ARTUR STELE
VICE PRESIDENT
GENERAL CONFERENCE

EDITORIAL



ROME IN PROPHECY AN IMPORTANT TRUTH WE MUST ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND

BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN
EDITOR, ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

I need faith to believe that Jesus is coming in the clouds of heaven.* I need faith to believe that the dead are going to rise. I need faith to believe that "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). But I don't need faith to believe in the role of Rome, Papal Rome, as the first beast in Revelation 13.

Are you kidding? The same prophecy that predicts the future coming of God's "kingdom which shall never be destroyed" is one of the prophecies that has already shown us the role of Rome in the last days.

Daniel 2, 7, and 8

In Daniel 2, one power arises after ancient Greece and, though changing form, exists until supernaturally destroyed at the end of time. In Daniel 7, one power arises after ancient Greece, a persecuting and blaspheming power, a power that will think to change times and laws (Dan. 7:25)—and though changing form this same power exists until supernaturally destroyed at the end of time. In Daniel 8, one power arises after ancient Greece, a persecuting and blasphemous power that exists until supernaturally destroyed at the end of time (Dan. 8: 17, 19)



What power arises after ancient Greece, a persecuting and blasphemous power that remains until the end of time? It is solely, only, and totally Rome, a power that had already made a grand entrance early in the New Testament. “And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered” (Luke 2:1)

Next, this same power—which three times Daniel shows will exist until the end of the world—this same power reappears, but now in Revelation 13:1-10, where it is depicted by imagery directly from Daniel 2, 7, 8, the chapters that unmistakably reveal it in history in the first place. And its whole appearance in Revelation is the context of persecution regarding worship of the Creator or “the image of the beast” (Rev. 13:15).

What else could this beast be, which has a deadly wound that is healed (Rev. 13:3), but Rome—now in the Papal phase?

IN PLACE OF CHRIST

Meanwhile, imagine if the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists claimed that it, and it alone, possessed all the merits of Christ, and that if you wanted to be saved you needed to go through the institution of the church itself. That is, because the church alone possesses those merits, it alone can give them to you. You can find salvation but only through it, the church itself. In other words, what we know that we get, one-on-One, though faith in Jesus, Rome claims comes through it, the Roman Catholic Church, instead.

If the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists claimed that prerogative for itself, that we find salvation only through it, we would be appalled, and rightly so. Yet this is exactly what Rome does, the Rome that

some apologists among us are so eager to defend, even claiming “commonalities” between us.

Antichrist does not mean only “against Christ” but also “in place of Christ,” and Papal Rome itself, by its very claims for itself, puts itself in the place of Christ. It’s no wonder that for centuries the Protestant Reformation was fueled by rejection of this blasphemy and apostasy. And only because so much of Protestantism has lost its prophetic way (focusing on wars in the Middle East instead) that this foundational truth, a truth that cost untold numbers their lives, has been all but forgotten today.

Even among some of us as well. One Adventist apologist for Rome, so far removed from understanding either what we teach, or what Rome teaches, or both—recently talked about how Adventists and Catholics share the same mission of “preaching the gospel.” *Preaching the gospel?* What the antichrist preaches is not the gospel.

ELLEN WHITE

Next, critics among us claim that our position about Rome is based on Ellen White, specifically *The Great Controversy*. They act as if she herself was the one who created this position, and that we adhere to it only because of her.

Come on! Almost all Protestants, for centuries, had this view of Rome, including early Adventists, who believed it long before she wrote *The Great Controversy*. Whatever prophetic light the Lord gave her about church history and Rome, which she put in the book, simply

fleshed out what the Adventist Church had already believed about Rome and last day events.

Our prophetic message about Rome and the mark of the beast were not Ellen White creations any more than our theology about the Sabbath or the state of the dead were, either.

This is an important truth that we must *always* keep in mind.

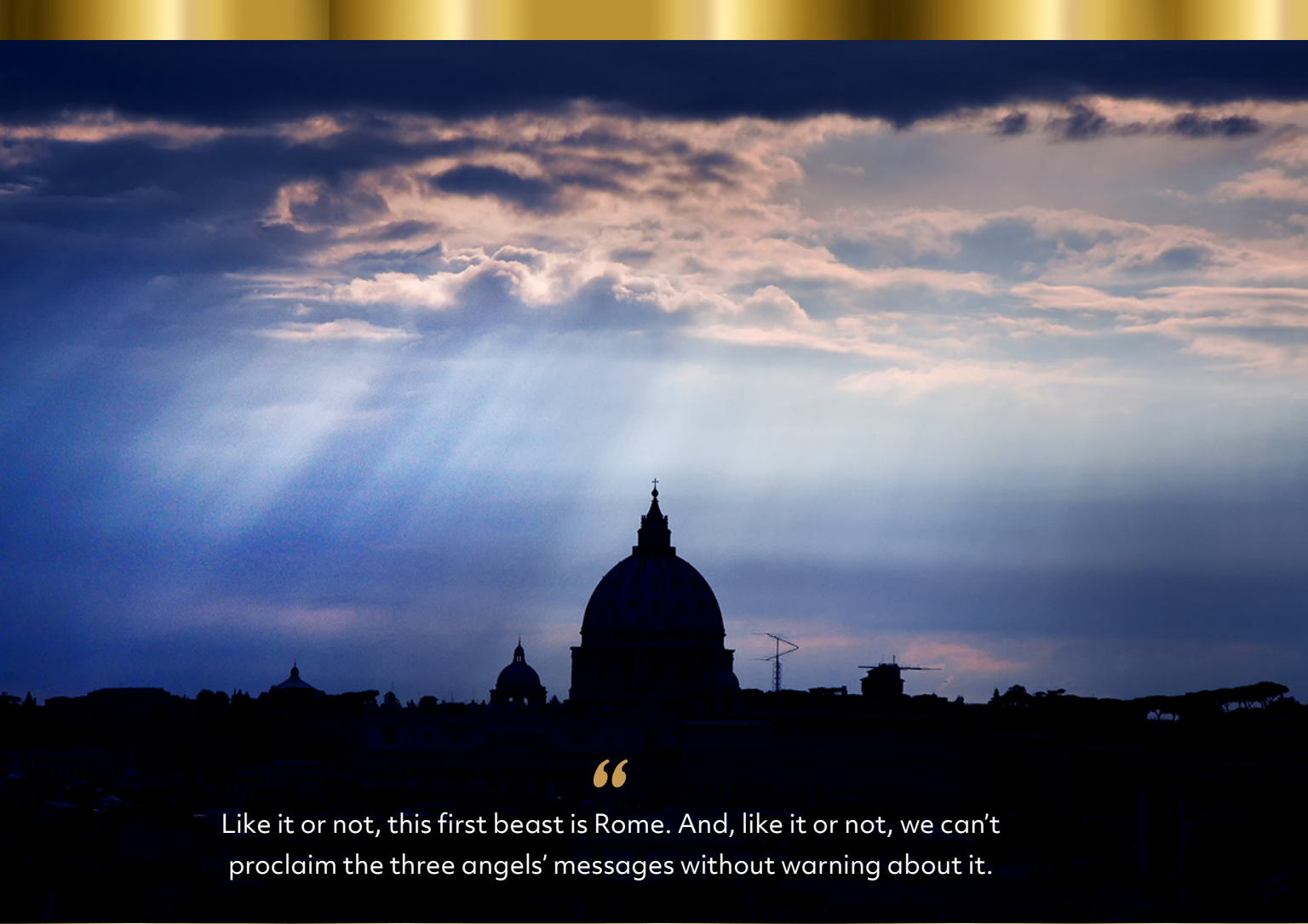
HOSTILE TO ROMAN CATHOLICS

Over the years, but even more recently, the claim is that we Adventists are “hostile” to Roman Catholics, or that we even “hate” them. This reminds me of the front-loaded question, “Have you stopped beating your wife yet?” It’s the same principle here. In my 45 years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have never come across anything remotely hostile to individual Roman Catholics. Even when pastors preach (which is rare anymore) on Rome, I have never heard them promote any hostility to those who are in the Roman Catholic Church. I have been friends with many Roman Catholics, and my theological beliefs about their church never influenced my feelings about them any more than my beliefs about other churches did about the people in those churches. The prophecies about Rome have been, and still are, irrelevant to how I relate on a personal level to Roman Catholics, and I suspect it’s that way with the vast majority of Seventh-day Adventists as well.

In 1980, I was listening to a series by an Adventist evangelist named Jere Webb, the sermons that

“

Antichrist does not mean only “against Christ” but also “in place of Christ,” and Papal Rome itself, by its very claims for itself, puts itself in the place of Christ.



“

Like it or not, this first beast is Rome. And, like it or not, we can't proclaim the three angels' messages without warning about it.

prompted me to join the church. When talking about Rome in prophecy, Pastor Webb said something like, “I don't want to offend anyone, or hurt anyone.” Then, I remember him saying, “I especially don't want to *hurt* anyone.” His sensitivity made a big impression on me, and it reflects how our evangelists so often deal with this topic in public meetings.

The claim, then, that we are hostile to Roman Catholics is as false as all the rest of the polemics by those in the church

who want to steer us away from the three angels' messages.

THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

And here is, really, the rub. We have been called to proclaim the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, which warns against the mark of the beast. And because the beast is Rome, we can't be faithful to what we have been called to proclaim without warning about the beast, Rome.

But don't take my word

for it. Or the Adventist Church's. Or Ellen White's. Take Scripture's. Read Daniel 2, where one power arises after ancient Greece and exists to the end of the world, when it's supernaturally destroyed. The same in Daniel 7: one power arises after ancient Greece and exists until supernaturally destroyed at the end of the world. In Daniel 8, even after Greece itself is named for us (Dan. 8:21), one power arises after it, a persecuting and blasphemous power

supernaturally destroyed at the end. How much faith do you need to see all this? Most of it is already past history.

And this same power reappears, now in Revelation 13, as the first beast. Like it or not, this first beast is Rome. And, like it or not, we can't proclaim the three angels' messages without warning about it.

*This article was first posted as an online column for the [*Adventist Review*, Oct. 22, 2024](#). Used with permission.



ALL GOD'S PURPOSES WILL BE FULFILLED

By Ellen G. White

The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down, and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light. . . The Scripture is all true, but by misapplying the Scripture men arrive at wrong conclusions. We are engaged in a mighty conflict, and it will become more close and determined as we near the final struggle.

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today.

Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has

foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and through His providence, acting in its appointed place in the world's history, He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established. His law is linked with His throne, and satanic agencies combined with human agencies cannot destroy it.

“
Truth is
inspired
and
guarded
by God;
it will
live, and
succeed.

Truth is inspired and guarded by God; it will live, and will succeed, although it may appear at times to be overshadowed. The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character. The deceptions practiced against it, every device for vindicating falsehood, every error forged by satanic agencies, will eventually be eternally broken, and the triumph of truth will be like the appearing of the sun at noonday. The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth with healing in His wings, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

—*Selected Messages*, Book 2, pp. 101, 103, 108.

COMMITMENT TO MISSION: JOHN AND DOROTHY ANDREWS

By Gary Krause, director, Office of Adventist Mission¹

Editor's Note: We are familiar with the story of John Nevins (J.N.) Andrews who served as the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary, along with his children, Mary and Charles, in Switzerland. Sadly, both Mary and J. N. Andrews died of tuberculosis. His son, Charles returned to the United States and married Marie Ann Dietschy. The couple had a son whom they named after Charles' father, John Nevins Andrews. Following is a story from the life of this younger John Nevins (J.N.) Andrews, who, along with his wife, Dorothy, pioneered the Adventist work in western China from 1916 to 1932.²

Born January 13, 1891, in Battle Creek, Michigan, John Nevins Andrews was the namesake of his grandfather who served as the first Seventh-day Adventist overseas missionary.

In the spring of 1916, Andrews was completing his medical training at George Washington University. His girlfriend, Dorothy, was a nursing student at Washington Sanitarium. Dorothy was born in India, where her parents, William and Georgia Spicer, had served as missionaries.

It was generally considered unacceptable to marry while still in school, so the adventurous couple hatched a plan. They dropped Dorothy's mother off at a concert in Washington, D.C., telling her they would pick her up later. Then they drove to Baltimore and found a minister to marry them. When they picked up Dorothy's mother, they told her the news and swore her to secrecy until later. Within a few weeks of graduating, they set sail

for China where they spent a year in Shanghai learning Chinese.

"For one brought up in a home such as mine, the natural consequence was to prepare for, and expect to go to a mission field," Dorothy wrote. "To go out and work for ourselves, for our own advancement, simply never occurred to us."

From Shanghai, John and Dorothy traveled to Chungking (Chongqing) in Southwest China. It was a 1,300-mile trip by boat, foot, and sedan chair and where their first child, Robert, was born in 1917. The couple served there for more than two years, but their hearts were set on going to the mission frontier of Tibet.

In 1918, Andrews went on an exploratory trip with a fellow missionary to Tatsienlu (Kangding). Located on the Tibetan border, it was where he hoped to establish a mission clinic. Despite being shot at by robbers, they reached their destination and arrived safely back in Chungking.



On June 10, 1919, the family embarked on the same journey, using a large houseboat to carry their belongings. Within seven miles of their final port, their boat was wrecked. All their goods, including food, clothes, and books—were thoroughly drenched.

In the Tibetan border region, conversion to the Christian religion was forbidden, a crime punishable by death. Largely because of his surgical skills, Andrews gained the trust of the Tibetans who came to his clinic.

Andrews also produced the first Adventist literature in Tibetan. Tatsienlu was a major hub for the tea trade. Through acquaintances made

with traders who came to the clinic, he sent gospel tracts across the border sewn up in packages of tea.

John and Dorothy had four more children while serving in China. Tragically, during their first furlough home in 1923, their five-month-old baby, Judy, died of whooping cough. Despite this heartbreak, they returned to Tatsienlu the following year, where a sentiment against foreigners was beginning to grow.

In 1926, the family was forced to flee. It was the middle of winter, and they traveled over treacherous mountain passes to Chengdu. From there, they headed to Chungking by bamboo raft and boat. They arrived in the middle of the night, and across the river, they could see the city on fire. They found refuge in the American consulate until they found passage on a steamer to Shanghai. There they remained until 1928 when the family undertook another perilous journey back to Tatsienlu. They continued serving there until 1932, when they felt it was time to return to America.

Andrews passed away on October



Above: Dr. Andrews on his way to Tibet

Right: A letter written by John Andrews to his parents detailing his difficult journey.

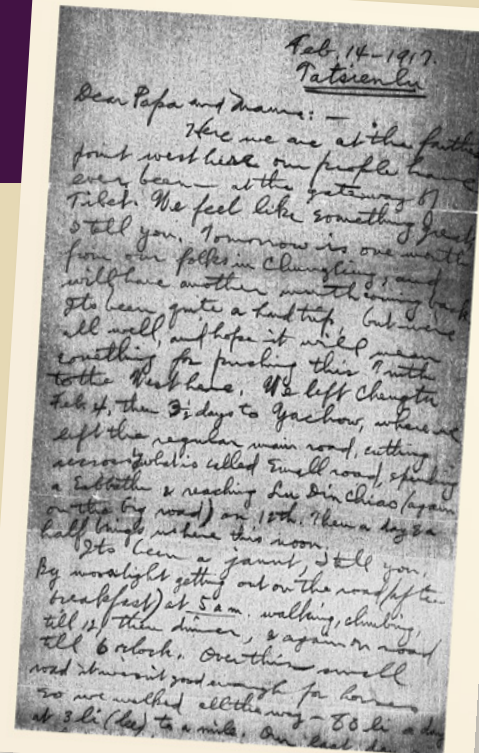
20, 1980, aged 89. Dorothy passed away on April 17, 1979, aged 86. They rest together at the Montecito Memorial Park in Colton, California, awaiting the return of Jesus.

¹ Author of *God's Mission, My Mission* (Pacific Press, 2023). Article adapted by Jonathan Gomide.

² First published in *Mission 360*, Vol. 12, Number 4. Used with permission.

“We go to help them because we love Jesus. Arriving, we find folk, very different from our own countrymen, and not, to our prejudiced mind, so lovable. But we work and pray and hope all things for them. We laugh with them in their joys and comfort them in their sorrow and minister to them in their sickness, and out of it all there is born a love that is much like the love of a mother for her child. It is that feeling that calls the missionary back to lonely, uncomfortable places even before his furlough is over, and enables him to disregard difficulties as mere incidentals.”

—Dorothy Spicer Andrews, “Missionary Memories: Off for Tibet,” *Youth's Instructor*, September 11, 1934, p. 7



“It is that feeling that calls the missionary back to lonely, uncomfortable places even before his furlough is over.”

KLEYTON FEITOSA

REMEMBERING A MAN OF GOD

Kleyton Feitosa, director of the Global Mission Centers at the General Conference (GC), passed away on November 20, 2024. Feitosa’s career spanned local, regional, and global mission work, providing leadership and direction within the Adventist Church.

“We have lost a great spiritual mission leader,” remarked Ted Wilson, president of the Adventist Church. “Kleyton brought a positive, balanced, mission-focused approach to everything he did as he served as the Global Mission Center Director for Adventist Mission at the General Conference.”

A MINISTRY BUILT ON LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Kleyton Feitosa began his pastoral ministry at Curitiba Central Church in Brazil, the largest community church in South America. Stanley Arco, president of the South American Division, observed, “Even at the beginning of his ministry in Curitiba, Kleyton’s passion for young people and his ability to connect with them was evident.”

In 2003, Feitosa relocated to the United States to pursue advanced theological studies at Andrews University. After completing his studies, he was called to the Chesapeake Conference, where he served as pastor of the Waldorf Seventh-day Adventist Church and successfully planted a new congregation in St. Charles County, Maryland.

Recognized for his administrative capabilities, Feitosa was appointed Executive Secretary of the Chesapeake Conference in 2011, where he worked under then-President Rick Remmers. “Kleyton demonstrated sound judgment as an administrator, which allowed him to be effective in a wide variety of settings,” recalled Remmers, now assistant to the president of the North American Division. “Kleyton had a warm and gracious spirit that drew people in. Throughout his long battle with cancer, he demonstrated a deep and abiding trust in the Lord.”

Feitosa’s cross-cultural leadership experience expanded in 2014 when he accepted a call to serve as president of the Egypt-Sudan Field. In this role, Feitosa navigated complex cultural and religious contexts, focused on building local leadership capacity and developed mission strategies in areas where Adventists were a minority.

Rick McEdwards, president of the Middle East North Africa Union Mission, expressed his profound sense of loss.



“I have lost a dear colleague and friend. . . he was a man of God whose dedication and humility inspired everyone around him. . . He leaves a legacy of leadership and witness, and his impact will be felt for generations.

In 2017, Feitosa returned to the United States due to health concerns and served as pastor of the Living Word Seventh-day Adventist Church in Glen Burnie, Maryland. His ability to connect with diverse communities remained a defining feature of his ministry.

LEADERSHIP AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

In 2023, Feitosa was appointed director of Global Mission Centers at the GC. In this capacity, he oversaw six mission centers dedicated to outreach and education for Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, secular/post-Christian, and urban populations. The centers provide resources, training, and strategies to help Adventists build meaningful relationships and engage in working within these communities.

Under Feitosa, the Global Mission Centers flourished not just because of his administration,

according to Gary Krause, director of Adventist Mission, but because of his Christ-like leadership. Krause reflected, “Kleyton didn’t just talk about Jesus’ love and compassion, he modeled it. He was wise and gentle, and his faith in the face of major health challenges was a constant inspiration.”

HEALTH CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE

Feitosa’s ministry journey included health challenges.

Diagnosed with liposarcoma in 2011, he underwent multiple surgeries and treatments, including the eventual amputation of his leg in 2018. Despite these trials, he continued to serve in leadership roles, demonstrating resilience and commitment to his work.

“Kleyton turned his illness into an opportunity to encourage missionaries and pastors who are struggling with other problems,” observed Erton Köhler, GC executive secretary. “He showed how we can turn even the worst adversities into a blessing to others.”

A FAMILY COMMITTED TO SERVICE

Feitosa’s family played a central role in his ministry. His wife, Delma, an educator, supported his work while contributing to the communities they served. Their two sons, Derek and Malton, often accompanied him during his ministry assignments, gaining firsthand experience in mission work.

The Feitosa family’s involvement in ministry reflected their shared commitment to service and the values of Adventist mission. Their unity and faith were evident in every aspect of Kleyton’s work.

ACKNOWLEDGING A LIFE OF DEDICATION

Ted Wilson had the opportunity to visit Kleyton and his family two days before he passed away and was able to thank him for his, and his family’s service to the world church. Wilson recalled, “He spoke very briefly, reminding us that the central focus of his life was mission—he cared about mission deeply. Then he just rested, with his wife by his side, holding his hand.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes Kleyton Feitosa’s contributions to local, regional, and global ministry. From his early pastoral work in Brazil to his leadership at the GC, his dedication to mission work and cross-cultural ministry left a lasting impact on the church’s outreach efforts.

**Abridged from “Remembering Kleyton Feitosa’s Faithfulness and Service,” published on ANN, Nov. 22, 2024.*



NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION/PIETER DAMSTEEGT

“

Kleyton didn’t just talk about Jesus’ love and compassion, he modeled it. He was wise and gentle, and his faith was a constant inspiration.



GC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

WITH HENSLEY MOOROVEN AND KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN

During the past three Annual Council meetings, Hensley Mooroven, General Conference (GC) Undersecretary, and Karnik Doukmetzian, General Counsel for the GC, have given lively presentations offering helpful explanations in understanding policy and related items, how committees within the church operate, the role of GC Executive Committee members, and more. Their primary objective has been to demonstrate how effective Church governance is essential to the fulfillment of its mission.

These presentations were given in response to the world church's Strategic Plan Leadership Objective 10 – KPI 10.2: “An orientation process for officers and executive committee members of all units of denominational structure is developed and widely implemented,” and more specifically to the GC Secretariat Strategic Issue #7—Working Policy KPI 4: “To develop and implement an orientation process on policy-related items as well as others for officers and executive committee members of all units within the denominational structure.”

Following are highlights from these insightful presentations.

WHY PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

Octopus on Roller Skates: “Performing your work without planning is like an octopus on roller skates. There's plenty of movement, but you never know if it's going to be forward, backward or sideways.” —Hensley Mooroven

Angels Only Work in a System of Order: “If we see no necessity for harmonious action and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the cooperation of the heavenly messengers must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can cooperate with them. But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder.” (*Counsels for the Church*, p. 244)

2022 ANNUAL COUNCIL ORIENTATION HIGHLIGHTS IN REVIEW

- The General Conference has had a Working Policy book since 1926. Originally intended as a “little pocket pamphlet,” it comprised just 63 pages.
- The Working Policy book is “our family code of conduct.”
- It provides a framework for our organizations to operate, protects us from autocratic leadership, and helps in making decisions.
- Policy is dynamic. Always use the most current edition of the Working Policy.
- Conflict of Interest—important to sign document each year and to disclose any possible conflict of interest.
- The 4Ds in Managing a Conflict of Interest: Define, Disclose, Determine, Document

2023 ANNUAL COUNCIL ORIENTATION HIGHLIGHTS IN REVIEW

- The Fiduciary duties of a member of the GC Executive Committee include:
- Care (attending regularly, being prepared, involved in discussions, voting)
- Loyalty (conflict of interest disclosure, not using positions for personal gain, undivided allegiance to the organization)
- Compliance (complying with decisions made by committee, complying with the laws of the land)



Hensley Mooroven (left) and Karnik Doukmetzian use some humor to bring home their points in lasting ways.

[TOR TJERANSEN/AME (CC BY 4.0)]

2024 ANNUAL COUNCIL ORIENTATION HIGHLIGHTS IN REVIEW

WHY COMMITTEE PROCESSES MATTER

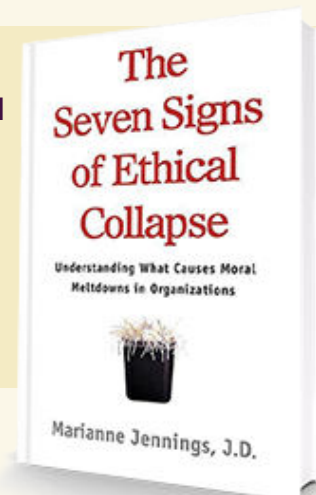
- A fundamental operating principle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that we work through committees.
- Organizational units have a defined membership
- Organizational membership and status are conferred
- Decision-making is based on group processes
- Authority is distributed throughout the organization
- We have established four organizational units as a church and each level as a defined membership:
 - 1) local congregation;
 - 2) conference;
 - 3) union;
 - 4) General Conference
- Effective group decisions do not arise spontaneously. They require deliberate designs in structure.
- Committees have a negative connotation.

“Bad meetings happen to good people.”

—Hensley Mooroven

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

The Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse
by Marianne Jennings, J.D.



Committees are not productive if we are not intentional in what we are doing.

ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM	INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM
Executive Committee (EXCOM)	Board of Trustees/Directors
Membership elects the EXCOM	Membership (sponsor of organization) elects Board
Membership elects officers	Board appoints officers
Each entity part of a chain of organization (from local church to the GC)	Each entity is a “stand alone” organization—its own legal entity
Numerous employees on EXCOM	Only one institutional employee on Board (usually the president/CEO)
EXCOM chair—internal	Board chair—always external (from the sponsor of the institution)
Executive Officers report directly to the EXCOM	Only CEO reports to Board

TWO SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE

There are two systems of governance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

- **Ecclesiastical system**—the church, conference, union, etc.
- **Institutional System**—hospitals, universities, etc.

These are two distinct, separate systems of church governance. If we fail to understand how different they are, it can cause some frustration, and worse case scenario, it can cause organizational collapse (see table above).



ELEMENTS OF BOARD ROOM CULTURE

Elements of board room culture include: Attitude, Attention, Atmosphere, Altitude

ATTITUDE

Attitude involves a commitment to excellence and enthusiasm about mission

- When preparing a meeting agenda, always start with mission, never problems!
- “Challenges give perspiration, mission gives inspiration!” (Hensley Mooroooven)
- Three important questions:
 - What is it that we do?
 - Who do we serve—what is our purpose for being here?
 - How do we excel at what we do?
- Why pursue excellence in whatever we do? Because God demands nothing less. That’s the very nature of everything God does.
- When we pursue excellence in everything we do, we give credibility to our organization.
- When your organization pursues excellence in everything it does, you give credibility to the gospel message that this organization is to preach. If our organizations are poorly led as a sheer matter of governance, the future of preaching the Word augurs poorly. This is why we commit to excellence in what we do.

ATTENTION

Attention involves effective use of time and focusing on strategic issues

- Be careful not to spend time disproportionate to the results achieved.
- Boards have a tendency to drift from governance into management.
- Important to look forward. Don’t spend time on things you can do nothing about.
- When drafting agendas, think of three things: A window to the past.
 - (Financial report, administrative reports, etc.)
 - A window to the present. (Things that need to be dealt with in the present time)
 - A window to the future. (Most important—your strategic plan, your direction)

ATMOSPHERE

The chair should create an atmosphere where it is safe for members to speak openly, without fear of retribution.

- Conversation should be respectful and tactful.
- Focus on strategic issues
- Leadership is not about having all the answers.
- Leadership is about asking the right and probing questions.
- Jesus asked 307 questions, and 183 questions were asked of Him, and He only answered 3.
- For the first time in history, we have 4 different generations in the boardroom. Because of this generational diversity, we need to adapt our leadership style to include more transparency and participation in the decision-making process.

ALTITUDE

In gaining altitude, it is important to focus on *governance*, not management, and to take into account the big picture and future perspective.

- *Governance* sets goals, priorities, and the strategic plan, and evaluates how an organization is doing to achieve those goals and objectives and policies that are voted on.
- *Management* implements the voted policies. The role of administration is to determine *how* to carry out the strategic plan.
- It’s important to draw the line between good governance and management.
- It is not your *aptitude* that will determine your altitude—it is your *attitude*!
- Your capabilities can get you to the top, but only your character will keep you there.

The Pure Gift of Leadership

“He who leads, let him lead with diligence” (Romans 12:8).

To watch the full presentations, visit the GC Executive Committee website, 2024 Annual Council Presentations at: executivecommittee.adventist.org

CONNECTING SEEKERS WITH THE SAVIOR

THE ADVENTIST CHURCH'S NEW DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR MISSION

By Richard Stephenson, Associate Treasurer, General Conference

In an era where digital connectivity shapes our daily lives, the Church is taking bold steps to harness technology for its global mission. The “Digital Strategy for Mission” initiative represents a comprehensive approach to evangelism in the digital age, blending traditional outreach methods with innovative online strategies to extend the reach of the local church.

Presented at LEAD24, this strategy is anchored in

Christ’s approach of reaching people where they are, and informed by the counsel of Ellen G. White.

The Digital Strategy for Mission comprises seven key strategies, each designed to address aspects of digital evangelism and online outreach. These are meant to guide the Church in how to effectively spread the message of Jesus through modern technology while staying true to our mission.

STRATEGY 1: Ensure the sustainability and accessibility of the Church’s digital evangelistic efforts.

Digital evangelism must be impactful, sustainable, and anchored to the local church. From faithful stewardship of budgets, to training local church members, to praying with others online, to harnessing emerging technologies in mission, the Church can

maintain a relevant online presence. These efforts are anchored in strong financial planning and strategic use of resources for ongoing engagement with individuals seeking Jesus.

Partnering with local churches extends the reach of these efforts,

helping people move from digital engagement to active participation in a local faith community.

The strategy champions hybrid evangelism, combining online engagement with traditional in-person evangelistic activities.

STRATEGY 2: Ensure responsible use of data with robust data collection, usage, and security protocols.

Safeguarding personal information is paramount to building and maintaining trust with seekers. We must understand the importance of transparency,

confidence, and robust security protocols to protect visitor, member, and employee data. Through GDPR-compliant practices, regular security audits, and fostering a

culture of digital responsibility, the Church leads by example in data protection. A strong foundation in data governance protects the organization and builds trust.

STRATEGY 3: Develop digital strategies for each entity, department, and ministry.

We are encouraging entities to create digital strategies that are relevant to local realities and needs while aligning with the I WILL GO strategic plan. Each strategy must be customized and contextualized.

STRATEGY 4: Adopt a plan for Enterprise Services, including adoption of World Church platforms

Using platforms like ACMS, 7me, Adventist Web Engine, and others, enables consistent and seamless operations across divisions and departments. This not only simplifies processes but also fosters collaboration, as church workers become proficient in using the same platforms.

STRATEGY 5: Integration and centralization of resources

Integrating and centralizing evangelistic and ecclesiastical resources prevents duplication of efforts, ensuring consistent messaging and branding across the Church. By sharing resources across entities, the Church maximizes its impact, minimizes costs, and encourages collaboration.

STRATEGY 6: Ensure digital evangelism is relevant, engaging, and anchored to local churches

Culturally relevant content must be created and connect viewers to local congregations. Through this, the Church can foster meaningful online interactions that lead to active participation in local churches. Local congregations and digital evangelism teams will collaborate to ensure alignment and the continuous refinement of strategies to meet local community needs.

STRATEGY 7: Secure the church's online identity through effective brand management and SEO. Building a strong online presence is essential to the church's mission.

There is a need for effective brand management and search engine optimization (SEO) to ensure the Adventist message and identity is easily recognized and discoverable across all digital platforms. We must review our digital properties, ensuring outdated or

irrelevant websites and social media pages are migrated, updated, or retired. Stale content detracts and distracts from the Church's message and mission, so a systematic approach must be taken to ensure that seekers encounter a contemporary and relevant Adventist presence online.

EXTENDING OUR REACH

The Digital Strategy for Mission integrates innovative digital evangelism methods with traditional in-person activities. This strategy doesn't replace established evangelistic outreach methods. Rather, it supports these efforts by extending their reach to include where the vast majority of people are living today—online. By incorporating these digital strategies and plans while maintaining a strong connection to local communities, the Church positions itself to more effectively share the Three Angels' Messages with a world in need of the Savior.

As the initiative moves forward, we welcome feedback from administrators, local church pastors, and members to refine the strategy. A guidebook explaining the Digital Strategy for Mission is expected to launch in the first half of 2025,

providing a comprehensive resource for implementing these strategies at all levels of the Church.

This is more than just a technological upgrade—it's a comprehensive effort by the Adventist Church to connect seekers with the Savior, fulfilling our mission through the power of the Holy Spirit. By combining innovation with a steadfast commitment to our identity as God's remnant people, anchoring our work with the local church, by God's grace, we are charting a course for effective, sustainable evangelism, hastening the soon return of our Lord.

For updates and resources related to the Digital Strategy for Mission, visit [Adventist.Digital](https://www.adventist.org/digital).





THE BACK PAGE

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

1 Montemorelos University in **Mexico** hosted its Ninth Congress on Biblical Creation and Intelligent Design. Organized by the Geoscience Research Institute’s Branch of the Inter-American Division (IAD) this three-day event, held February 14-16, offered an engaging exploration of faith and science, bringing together experts to illuminate God’s creation.

2 The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), headquartered in **Silver Spring, Maryland**, is grappling with significant disruptions to its global operations due to a recent funding pause imposed by the United States Government. This unprecedented action of USAID’s funding for humanitarian programs, including projects run by ADRA and other nonprofit organizations, forced ADRA to halt critical initiatives. The global organization was also forced to reduce 18 percent of its staff at ADRA International in the U.S., with additional layoffs occurring at other country offices.

3 The **North France Conference** (FFN) recently launched its first digital

evangelistic campaign of the year, held February 9 to 15. This initiative also marked the official inauguration of the FFN’s new digital studio at the Maison de l’Espérance. Led by FFN President Jean-Jack Chafograck, the campaign explored the theme “Biblical Prophecies: The Future Revealed.” The event utilized the latest digital technologies to share the message of Jesus’ soon return.

4 A team of healthcare professionals from Hearts for Mission (H4MI), accompanied by Rick McEdward, president of MENAUM, and Marcia McEdward, RN, director of the Health Ministry for MENAUM, recently wrapped up an exciting five-day trip to **Libya** to support the country’s healthcare and educational development. Warmly welcomed by the Libyan Government, the delegation, including a cardiothoracic surgeon, cardiologist, trauma specialists, and nurses, worked closely with the Libyan health officials to explore ways to provide support and share knowledge to enhance the country’s healthcare system.

5 The West Siberian Mission in **Tyumen**,

Russia, hosted a field school of evangelism for pastors, focusing on strengthening local church ministry and outreach. The event was held at the mission’s center and brought together key leaders, pastors, and young people who are currently involved in the “A Year in Ministry” initiative. The program concluded with a baptism, and 12 more people responding to the call to prepare for baptism in the future.

6 Penang Adventist Hospital (PAH), a premier

Seventh-day Adventist healthcare institution with a century-long legacy of excellence in **Malaysia**, has once again been recognized for its commitment to holistic and high-quality medical care. *Newsweek*, in collaboration with global data firm Statista, has named PAH among Asia’s top private hospitals for 2025. Rooted in the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, PAH believes that true healthcare goes beyond physical treatment, addressing the emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of every patient.

SPRING MEETING 2025

We are looking forward to our final Spring Meeting of the quinquennium, held April 8-9, 2025, in a hybrid environment. According to Working Policy BA 05 07 the main purpose of the Spring Meeting is to address financial considerations. Some items slated for Spring Meeting include:

- Treasurer’s Report
- Treasury and Stewardship Partnership
- Rules of Order revisited in preparation for GC Session
- Guidelines for online churches and house churches
- Special Health Ministries report on Sanitariums
- Reports given by GC Education and Publishing departments
- Spirit of Prophecy Committee will present their strategic proposal for 2025-2030
- A Report on the online Global Bible School
- And more