

# Bulletin of Prophetic Historicism

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### Steering Clear of Divisive Politics

As we prepare this Prophetic Bulletin, strong divisions are convulsing the United States just before a new administration is to begin on January 20, three days from now. Some fear an uprising, even bloodshed.

It is sadly true that Seventh-day Adventists are not exempt from the emotions, even the antagonisms, which afflict the country. But it would be well for us to steer away from divisive politics and rather focus on what all Seventh-day Adventists should have in common: a proclamation of the Three Angels' Messages.

Above all, we need to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to finish the Lord's work throughout the length and breadth of the earth, to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, so that Jesus can come. He will assuredly not do so before we have finished the Great Commission, to gather and prepare a people for his coming. In the writings of E. G. White we read that there is to be a revival of primitive godliness such as the world has not seen since apostolic times.

Then, too, a voice from heaven will say to his elect who are still in Babylon: "Come out of her, my people" (Rev. 18:4). We long for the Second Coming when our Prince of Peace shall return.

### Looking Back

In many ways, 2020 has been a surprising and horrible year. Covid-19, the virus from hell, which is still with us, suddenly struck at the heart of the world's health and economy. For Americans, it beclouded a presidential election that seemed at times to tear into the fabric of democracy as they have known it for more than 200 years. As mentioned by a previous Bulletin, the virus also thwarted the pope's plans for a grand ecumenical get-together in Rome of leaders both secular and spiritual to forge a new world order, which he was planning. It likewise prevented a session of the SDA General Conference, which with could have broken upon the unity of the world Church through continuing dissention about women's ordination. Across the Atlantic pond, the United Kingdom after half a century tore away from and weakened the European Union.

On the domestic front, we have now for months been cooped up at home, to a large extent without visitors and unable to attend church because of the danger posed by the virus to elderly people. This has especially affected Ria, who always yearns for company and fellowship, especially now because she has multiple health issues. Edwin, almost ninety-one years of age, is her nurse and also has to drive to the bank as well as the store for the family shopping. Our vegetarianism and pharmaceutical requirements make it difficult for others to help out.

Christmas was a very lonely day, and even more so our 66th wedding anniversary on December 26. A dear sister from church brought us some food, and so did the kind Chinese lady and her daughter who live next door. We did have one guest: our son Carl. On the other hand, we were immensely cheered by an amazing number of well-wishers who congratulated us by telephone, cards arriving through the mail, and WhatsApp conversations from the United States, South Africa, Europe, India, New Zealand, and Australia. Our dear friend, Alice Annandale, had through her Prayer Warrior notification spread our news around the planet!

## **The Virus**

Although vaccines against Covid-19 have now become available, administering them has become complicated and contentious. Besides, the demons who invented it are creating mutations to thwart the efforts of human scientists and are sowing discord, even within our Church.

With all kinds of arguments, some of them very peculiar, these devils are also inspiring people *not* to accept the vaccines. Their motive is obvious: to let as many human beings perish as possible. Consider that every unvaccinated person is not only a candidate for Covid-19 infection but for carrying it to others. Do remember that the Lord Jesus said: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31).

Some Christians, and not only Seventh-day Adventists, reason that they cannot be infected by the virus because in Ps. 91:3, 6 the Almighty promised to protect his people against danger and death through pestilence. Also, we must simply observe the principles of healthful living. Nevertheless, some saints of God, who did so, have been infected and not a few have died. We personally know of two such cases, both of them involving Seventh-day Adventists who had also been workers for the Lord.

One brother survived at the age of 93, together with his wife of 94. They were hospitalized with pneumonia resulting from Covid-19. Antibiotics and other medical treatment helped them survive. Despite their age, they had excellent immune systems, because of healthful living. At home, their treatment continued, and five weeks after being discharged from the hospital they could go to church again. It is now two months since they left the hospital. Undoubtedly there was also a divine element, but without treatment, including modern medicine, they would probably have died.

The other brother, at the age of 80, was not so fortunate. Likewise a very saintly man and a worker in the Lord’s vineyard, when he caught the Covid-19 and was also taken to hospital, he died, in spite of the best treatment available. Why? Perhaps it was because of his cancer that had gone into remission, but was likely to return. In this case, passing away was no doubt a merciful release.

It is possible, even likely, that the incidence of Seventh-day Adventists who die a Covid-19 death is much lower than that of the general population. But the Lord has given us common sense, and nowhere did he say: “Thou shalt not be vaccinated”? And so, as soon as the vaccination becomes available in our area, both of us intend to go for the jab.

## **Angolan Students Stranded in Cuba**

Late last year, it gave us great pleasure to help two students from Angola studying at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Havana, Cuba. Although that country has a Marxist government, we have more than 35,000 believers living there, and their Seminary is

a four-year institution fully accredited with our denomination. Because of its very reasonable fees, it also draws ministerial students from several other countries where the mother tongue is Spanish. They pay only \$1,000.00 (U.S.) per semester, which covers tuition as well as board and lodging. For laundry and other expenses, they need some extra money.

In Angola, Africa, the denomination, lacking a full-fledge college, provides only limited ministerial training. Since the lingua franca over there is Portuguese, a language related to Spanish, they also find our SDA Theological Seminary in Cuba an attractive place to study. To augment their income, they can normally earn money as colporteurs or do other work in nearby countries like Mexico or Panama.

But last year two men from Angola miscalculated through no fault of theirs. After they had completed two years of the ministerial course, they ran out of money—and the Covid-19 virus upset their plans, for regulations made it impossible to leave the island. And so they wrote an e-mail to Edwin, explaining their dilemma. They thought that either he or somebody he knew could assist them. Among other things, they wrote: “That is why we extend this letter to ask whoever is able and willing to help us with these expenses and thus be able to have a degree in theology and return to our country and serve as pastors of the Lord’s flock and hasten the coming of Jesus Christ.”

We were stunned. How could we help on our limited income? Thinking back to our years in South Africa, we remembered how—together with a few other white believers—we paid for the studies of another black ministerial student until he graduated and entered the Lord’s work. But then we were both college teachers, each with an excellent income. Now we were retirees with limited means.

We wondered: “At least a \$1,000.00 for each! What can we possibly do about it?”

First, we found that we could make available \$200.00 of our own funds. Then we sent out appeals to a few friends, although we know that this was a bad time to ask anybody to donate anything. Due to the impact of the virus, many people had lost their jobs and were desperate for their own financial survival. One brother did, however, add \$100.00.

And then there was a miracle. A professor friend sent \$1,000.00. It was the same non-SDA who had financed most of the printing and translation of Edwin’s books on prophecy. Some years ago, he had also donated means for printing an English translation of Andreas Helwig’s *Antichristus Romanus* (The Roman Antichrist). For this, we were unable to find a suitable translator with a sufficient knowledge of Latin who could also produce a good English version. Therefore, with our friend’s permission, we from those funds added another \$1,000.00.

This provided a total of \$2,300.00, which has already been delivered in Cuba. Of this amount \$2,000.00 will cover a semester’s tuition as well as boarding and lodging for both students. The other \$300.00 is to pay for their laundry and other expenses. In this way, half a year of their third year has been provided for.

But what about the rest of their studies? Recently each of us received \$600.00 stimulus money, that is, \$1200.00. We decided that of this we would denote \$1,000.00 and, again with the permission of our non-SDA donor added a further \$1,000.00 from the Andreas Helwig fund. Therefore, checks for another \$2,000.00 have already left our home to fund the second half of their third year’s study. We did not, however, like last time provide an additional \$300.00 to pay for their laundry and other non-academic expenses.

As you may have noticed, it is not our habit in these Prophetic Bulletins to ask donations for our self-supporting ministry, though some do come our way. But this time we are holding out the begging bowl on behalf of these ministerial students in Cuba. Perhaps you can kindly

also send part of your stimulus money. If so, please let us know. Our e-mail address is [edwdecock@hotmail.com](mailto:edwdecock@hotmail.com).

### **Furthermore . . .**

Now we, together with you, dear readers, have to face the rest of 2021, which remains extremely uncertain. But as we enter it, let us take heart, remembering that others before us have had to brave a future fraught with unknown dangers. For instance, in 1939, shortly after Britain had joined France in declaring war on Hitler's Germany with its mighty military machine, King George VI during his Christmas broadcast quoted these memorable words of Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957):

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:*

*"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."*

*And he replied:*

*"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."*

We can hardly do better.

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