

**Re: Sunday laws update. Vital information for Seventh-day Adventists (September 2015)**  
**From: Pastor Steve Wohlberg, Speaker/Director, White Horse Media**

For over 100 years, Adventists have anticipated Sunday laws in fulfillment of prophecy. In 1888, a Sunday law movement arose in America, but it died. The time was not yet. Today, a new Sunday law movement has resurfaced—led by Pope Francis—and daily grows in strength. Ellen White wrote that eventually:

... as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved *is seen to be approaching*, the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before. *The Great Controversy*, 605

Sunday law agitation is building before our eyes. We are told that “Those who place themselves under God's control, to be led and guided by Him, *will catch the steady trend of the events ordained by Him to take place.*” *RH*, Aug. 5, 1902. Note “the steady trend” of these headlines:

- **And on the Seventh Day We Rested?** (*Time*, July 25, 2004).
- **Tightrope: Better take a break [keep Sunday], or you'll break down** (*USA Today*, Oct. 25, 2007).
- **German Court Enforces Day of Rest** (ABC News, Dec. 3, 2009).
- **Slow Sunday: The simple solution to global warming.** “Using Sunday as a day of rest and renewal would be good for our personal health as well as the health of the planet” (*The Guardian*, Sept. 17, 2009).
- **Let's Make Sunday a day of rest, for God's sake** (*FoxNews.com*, April 22, 2012).
- **Keeping stores open on Sunday is not beneficial for society: Pope Francis** (*NY Daily News*, July 6, 2014).
- **Pope: No Work Sundays Not Just for Faithful** (*Fox News*, July 5, 2014, same story).
- **Arizona State Senator: Make Sunday Church Attendance Mandatory** (*CNN*, March 27, 2015).
- **Sunday as a Mark of Christian Unity** (*Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.*, April, 2015).
- **Capitalism's War on the Sabbath [Sunday]** (*Patheos*, September 7, 2015).

The “leopard-like beast” described in Revelation 13:1,2 “unquestionably points to the papacy.” *GC*, 439. “The light we have received upon the third angel's message is *the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be.*” *6T*, 16. “... when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome ... will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—‘the mark of the beast.’” *GC*, 449.

Momentum picked up on June 18, 2015 with the release of Pope Francis's 183-page encyclical on “climate change” entitled, “Praised Be You: On the Care of Our Common Home.” Section 237 states, “*Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships*

*with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world.*” The same day this encyclical was released, President Obama declared:

I welcome His Holiness Pope Francis's encyclical, and deeply admire the Pope's decision to make the case—clearly, powerfully, and with *the full moral authority* [see Revelation 13:7] of his position—for action on global climate change ... *I believe the United States must be a leader in this effort* [Rev. 13:12 predicts that the USA will promote the papacy and its principles]... ” (White House Press Release, June 18, 2015)

Significantly, an interreligious, grass roots movement is now seeking to influence public opinion to support the Pope’s encyclical. This has also resulted in increased Sunday law agitation:

**Should Sunday Trading Be Reformed?** (*South News*, Aug. 12, 2015). “A spokesman for campaign Keep Sunday Special, made up of *faith groups, retailers and unions*, said that there was concern not just because of the religious principle of the Sunday rest, but also for the effect on family and community life with those who work on Sundays not able to make up the time spent away from their children.”

**The Religion of Climate Change: Lending the power of the pulpit to the cause of environmental politics** (*Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 6, 2015). “Some 170 evangelicals—pastors, religion professors, nonprofit directors and others—sent an open letter to the president ‘to offer our support and encouragement for your efforts to overcome the climate challenge’ ... This teaming up of church and state on environmental issues has become common.”

**California Resolution in Praise of Pope Francis Encyclical** (July 16, 2015). The State of California recently voted to support the encyclical. “Sen. Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) called the resolution ‘a classic example of mixing church and state.’” The Pope’s encyclical states that grass roots movements should “... bring *healthy pressure* to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power ...” (*Praised Be*, Section 206). This is happening now. Notice carefully:

...[papal] doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men ... in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, *will yield to the popular demand* for a law enforcing Sunday observance. *GC*, 581, 592

The Pope’s strategy is brilliant. In his encyclical he creates this dichotomy: on the side of Evil is “out-of-control capitalism,” selfish consumerism, idolatrous profits, greed, exploitation of “our common home” (the earth), and neglect of the poor; on the side of Good he places the proper care of our environment, concern for the poor, respect for God, family values, the need for rest, *and keeping Sunday as part of his global solution to the human crisis.*

**Key events:** On September 24, Pope Francis speaks to a joint session of the U.S. Congress—the first for any Pope. On September 25, he addresses a United Nations gathering in New York City

—an event reported to include the largest gathering of world leaders ever. On September 26, he speaks at The World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. Media coverage will be massive.

The global influence of Pope Francis is reflected in this article, *Why the Pope Matters* (*Huffington Post*, Aug. 20, 2015). “There is no other religious, entertainment or political leader alive today who could garner anywhere near the kind of response inspired by the pope.” God’s word predicts, “All the world marveled and followed the beast.” Revelation 13:3.

**The Third Angel of Revelation 14:9-12:** 1) Is to be given by Seventh-day Adventists with a “loud voice.” 2) Plainly exposes “the beast” (the Papacy), its “image” (in America), and its “mark” (enforced Sunday observance contrary to God’s law). 3) Warns of God’s righteous judgments unmixed with mercy poured into “the cup,” 4) Jesus our Creator (John 1:10) drank this very same “cup” in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39), *which places Christ, His love, His cross, and His mercy in the midst of the Third Angel’s message*, 5) exalts “the commandments of God” (the Ten Commandments, God’s law of love which shows sinners their sins and need of a Savior; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24), 6) and “the faith of Jesus.” “*What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel’s message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour ... faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.*” 3SM, 172. Thus “justification by faith” is “the third angel’s message in verity.” *EV*, 190. The mark is essentially *a permanent stamp of commandment-breaking upon one’s character*. Forgiven saints love Jesus Christ, and by His power, they keep His law (see John 14:15).

**Proper Positioning before the Public:** “We should endeavor to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience.” 5T, 452. SDAs should stress: 1) That we are defenders of morality (the Ten Commandments), 2) that papal principles deny salvation by grace through faith in Christ, 3) That the papacy, by its very nature as a church/state union, opposes liberty of conscience. Thus we are defenders of morality, the gospel, and religious freedom. This will disarm prejudice and create favorable impressions, 4) We must teach “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) and reveal Jesus.

**Recent headlines: Pope Francis: Sundays are a gift from God – don’t ruin it** (*Catholic News Agency*, August 12, 2015). “*Francis pointed to Sundays as a particularly important time for rest, because ‘in them we find God.’*” Pope Francis stressed this in the context of his upcoming Sept. 26 speech in Philadelphia at The World Meeting of Families. *Thus there is no doubt that stressing Sunday is high on the Pope’s agenda for his American trip.*

**Francis: Celebration and rest are vital for harmonious family life** (*Catholic News Agency*, August 12, 2015). “The most important celebration for a family, the Pope said, *is Sunday ...*”

**Conclusion:** A grassroots “I Love Sundays” campaign leading to a September 20 “National Back to Church Sunday” offers additional evidence that what Seventh-day Adventists have been

expecting for so long is “at the doors.” Truly, “the time is at hand!” Revelation 22:10. While we should not set dates, or act like mere alarmists, we should surely be aware of the fulfillment of prophecy. Again, “those who place themselves under God’s control, to be led and guided by Him, *will catch the steady trend of the events ordained by Him to take place.*” *RH*, Aug. 5, 1902.

### **Closing Quotes:**

*The truth for this time, the third angel's message, is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, meaning with increasing power, as we approach the great final test ... The presentation of this message with all it embraces is our work. We stand as the remnant people in these last days to promulgate the truth and swell the cry of the third angel's wonderful distinct message ... 9MR, 291*

*We must proclaim the third angel's message ... We are not to cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth: we should scorn concealment. Unfurl your colors to meet the case of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise. Manuscript 16, 1890.*

But although we are to stand firm as a rock to principle, *we should be courteous and Christ-like in our dealings with all men.* In meekness and love we should tell the people why we cannot accept the papal Sabbath, because it is a mark of special dishonor to God, whom we love and worship. *RH*, February 7, 1893

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition. *GC*, 608

But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor. *5T*, 79

Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness,  
the church is to enter upon her final conflict. *PK*, 725

**Recommended reading:** These chapters in *The Great Controversy*: “Liberty of Conscience Threatened,” “The Impending Conflict,” “The Scriptures a Safeguard,” “The Final Warning.”