IN 1929, THE ITALIAN Parliament ratified the Lateran Treaty settling the Roman Question and setting the stage for what some have since described as the healing of the deadly wound. Somewhere between that time and today, an idea developed that has since taken many minds captive.

This idea was that from 1929 to the second coming of Jesus there will be exactly seven popes, and the seventh one would reign for a “short time.”

With a surface study of Revelation 17 in one hand and a February 12, 1929 San Francisco Chronicle headline, “healed wound of many years” in the other, advocates felt they had a valid Bible prophecy (though our pioneers taught a much longer healing process dating back to the 19th century). When Pope Benedict was elected, he was the 7th since 1929. And since he was 78, it did not appear that he would be in office very long and it seemed that the final crisis could burst forth at any time. However, Pope Benedict remained in office more than a “short space.” His reign was in fact longer than two of the previous popes noted in this interpretation (3. Pope John XXIII and 5. Pope John Paul I).

In addition, the election of Pope Francis I shows the interpretation to be false as he is the eighth since 1929. This fact, and that of the previous pope, number 7 who did not reign only for a short time or usher in the final events, was a crushing disappointment for some.

Many who have advocated this theory were devastated by the election of another pope. But for me at least, another pope was good news. The election of Pope Francis I helped debunk yet another newspaper interpretation. The gospel has survived a number of more recent false theories about the Second Coming, like Y2K, repeated Harold Camping predictions, the Mayan calendar scare, and now the 1929 interpretation.

The apostle might have included some of these predictions in his “rubbish” bin while directing us to
I GET ADMITTEDLY NERVOUS when I hear these words: “Pastor Asscherick, you changed my life.” You see, I’m not in the life-changing business; I’m just a messenger, a mail carrier. The biblical term is evangelist, one who carries a message.

That’s me.

My response has, over the years, become reflexive: “Well, thank you, but I’m sure it was Jesus Christ who changed your life, not me.”

“Yes, yes, of course,” is usually the reply. Or something like it. The point is taken, on both sides. I appreciate the affirmation, yes, but I appreciate the accuracy even more.

Jesus Christ is in the life-changing business, and He is awesome at it. For my part, I find it easy to “sell” and “tell” such a successful and consistent “product.” They say that Porsche salesmen do little more than hand out keys, because the cars sell themselves. I like that. That’s what we evangelists do: hand out keys, “the keys of the kingdom” (Matthew 16:19), no less! What we’re offering is better than any Porsche, however.

On my most recent trip to New Zealand, admittedly my favorite country on earth, I heard those words again: “Pastor Asscherick, you changed my life.” The man was dark-skinned, round-faced and smiled a smile that was as much eyes as mouth. His whole face radiated a joy that was as pure and beaming as I’ve seen. I liked him already. He introduced himself as Demcy, then told me a story that warmed my heart deeply.

Demcy had been living with his wife, Thrace, and three children, all boys, in Christchurch. He and Thrace had moved from Sri Lanka many years before. Raised a Roman Catholic, Demcy had a genuine, though not always enthusiastic, interest in spiritual things. He believed, sure, but not particularly deep. This, though, was about to change.

After seeing flyers and billboards around town advertising a meeting, What Does the Future Hold?, Demcy finally, on February 21, showed up. His heart thrilled with the truth he was hearing! This was the God of love and freedom He’d been looking for, and that he’d always believed was there, somewhere!
He left committed not to miss another meeting, but, alas, an unforeseeable disaster intervened. At 12:50 in the afternoon on February 22nd, beautiful, serene, and quaint Christchurch was racked by a powerful earthquake that killed hundreds, and shattered the lives, businesses, and confidence of thousands. It all happened in about 20 seconds.

The city, more than two years later, is still picking up the pieces and will be for another decade at least. This was the second such earthquake in less than six months, and though this one was weaker on the Richter scale than its predecessor, its shallowness, speed, and location made it far worse and many times more deadly.

Demcy, like many others, loaded his family in the car that very day and drove away from their beloved city. In Demcy’s case, they drove all the way north to Auckland. He spent the next two months looking for a new job and returning to Christchurch to transport his remaining things to Auckland. His whole life was in a great upheaval; he longed for solidity, hope, and deeper meaning.

He remembered that single meeting he’d attended and googled the presenter, “David Asscherick.” To his happy surprise, he found a set of similar prophecy lectures that I’d delivered before. He watched them day and night. He was surprised to learn, toward the end of the lecture series, that I was a Seventh-day Adventist. Nevertheless, he was persuaded that what he’d found was the truth. The next Sabbath he attended a local Seventh-day Adventist church.

The local pastor faithfully mentored, encouraged, and discipled Demcy and his wife, and soon they were baptized! A family torn from their home city by an earth-shaking quake, were now united in Jesus Christ by His life-changing truth! Demcy is now a deacon in his local church, and his mother, who still lives in Sri Lanka, is studying for baptism! She has even made her business, a hotel, available for Sabbath meetings in her town, which the local Seventh-day Adventists have been thrilled to put to use already!

God’s ripple effects are greater than any earthquake.

That meeting, from my perspective, sure looked like a grand failure after it’d been abruptly stopped halfway through and resumed rather weakly nearly a month later.

But sometimes what looks like failure is really a great success! Just like the Cross! Just ask Demcy!

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“mature” our minds in the message of Christ our “Righteousness” (Philippians 3:8-15, NKJV). I hope you share our burden for this message that will “swallow up” all others (Review & Herald Extra, Dec. 23, 1890).

God is waiting for people, not popes. Not until the light of the character of the love of God illumines the darkness of every human being on Planet Earth, will we see a final end to sin and suffering. Amen.

Light Bearers has a complete outline on Revelation 17 [The Woman and the Beast] available as a free download from our website: www.lightbearers.org/unlocking-revelation/

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IN POLITICS, are you Republican or Democrat? In terms of religion, are you sanguine or melancholy? In diet, are you vegan or vegetarian? Are you for or against . . . , in or out, yes or no, right or wrong? I mean really! Take a stand! Isn't that how we think at times? It is for good reason that we have developed a passion for platforms, positions, and absolutes. There is enough wishy-washy in the world. However, when it comes to certain issues, especially lifestyle related ones, I am continuing to be impressed with how wisdom is often found in the middle of the road, rather than in either extreme.

The average American diet is full, and I do mean full, of very cooked food. Some of the foods we eat use highly processed ingredients that are then cooked once, twice, sometimes three or even four times. Have we killed it yet?! Other foods we cook at temperatures and conditions that cause chemical reactions to occur that literally produce toxins in the food. Acrylamide is a chemical that has been classified as a probable carcinogen to humans. It is produced when starchy foods are cooked at high temperatures. “The higher the cooking temperature and the longer the cooking time, the greater the acrylamide concentration becomes . . . . The most concentrated food sources of acrylamide are processed foods such as potato chips and other baked or fried salty snacks and French fries.”

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are also produced when high cooking temperatures are used. AGEs have been associated with impaired immune function, inflammation, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, eye disease, nerve disease, and heart disease. “Foods that have the most concentration of AGEs are broiled, grilled, and fried meats.” The more browned the food, the greater its potential of having higher concentrations. For example, a fried egg or broiled tofu has higher concentrations than a boiled egg or warmed tofu.

Other harmful chemicals are produced at the barbecue. When meat, poultry, fish, or eggs are subjected to high-temperature cooking, such as barbecuing, grilling, or frying reactions occur that produce heterocyclic amines (HCAs). Grilling meat also produces polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). “The most concentrated sources of PAHS are grilled or charred meat, poultry and fish, grains, fats and oils, and sweets.” Both HCAs and PAHs are official carcinogens.

You don’t have to worry about these chemicals in raw or minimally cooked foods. The more food you consume in its natural, or close to natural, state, the less damaging dietary compounds you will ingest.

Understanding the dangers of overcooking has led some to forgo cooking altogether. This way of eating, however, has its social and satiation...
challenges as well as its nutritional concerns. There are advantages in cooking certain food items, such as promoting nutrient availability and enhancing digestibility. As an example, “The protein digestibility of some raw plant food is lower than the digestibility of that same protein when the food is boiled or steamed.”

There are those who thrive on consuming all raw. My hat goes off to them. However, I see this as an extreme. An extreme diet may be quite beneficial in an extreme situation, but on the whole, the benefits of raw food can be obtained and enjoyed without having them compose the entire diet.

Plant foods “deliver nature’s most powerful beneficial compounds—phytochemicals, plant sterols, antioxidants, fiber, and healthful fats.” Raw plant foods are an excellent source of nutrition. Vitamins are left untrammeled when eaten in a raw form. Research has shown that the average intake of vitamins A, C, E, and K in people groups who consume raw diets is double, triple and in some cases quadruple the daily recommended intake. That is some super nutrition.

Hundreds to thousands of compounds are present and work synergistically in plant foods. Obtaining nutrients in whole foods has proven to be far more effective than any supplement. Antioxidants in pill form don’t provide the same level of protection. The multitudinous amount of beneficiaries is not found in the same amount in processed or overcooked foods. Some destruction of these health-giving rescue heroes occurs when things get hot.

Phytochemicals mean plant chemicals. Plants produce these chemicals to protect themselves and promote their survival. When we eat these plant chemicals they protect us. When the plant undergoes stress of some kind, production of phytochemicals increases. If a plant is attacked it will launch a counterattack by manufacturing more. “Organic produce receives more contact with naturally occurring microorganisms and pests than conventionally grown food because synthetic herbicides and pesticides are not used.” This explains why organically grown produce has been found to typically have higher amounts of phytochemicals. Sprouting has been found to remarkably increase phytochemical and antioxidant content in some foods. Wheat, rye, and broccoli sprouts are power packed.

Cooking does result in the loss of some of these powerful substances in food to some degree. Often it depends on the temperature and duration of cooking time. Some substances actually become more bioavailable when cooked. By and large, the greatest concentration of antioxidants and phytochemicals are going to be found in raw food. That doesn’t mean that cooked food is dead, lifeless, or void of nutrition. It may just have less of some of these substances.

I enjoy food. I delight in well-prepared food. But I am becoming more conscious of how I prepare food. I am in the process of turning the stovetop temperatures lower and making my salad bowl larger. My take is why not do both and enjoy the best of both worlds.

Scripture’s encouragement is, “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Philippians 4:5). In other words, be a people who are consistent and balanced, not given to extremes. Be known as someone who is centered in Christ and from that solid platform receives wisdom as to how to relate to all the various issues in our world today. May God help us.

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2 Ibid., p. 68.
3 Ibid., p. 70.
4 Ibid., p. 89.
5 Ibid., p. 43.
6 Ibid., p. 47.

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Risë has been writing on various health subjects for over 20 years. She has inspired many through her research and down-to-earth writing and speaking style. She believes that healthy living is intimately tied to happiness and wholeness.