

25-5-6
Did EGW request that
her funeral be held on
Sabbath?

November 23, 1960

10383 Date Avenue
Arlington, California

Dear Brother :

You have written concerning Sabbath funerals, and the fact that Sister White's funeral was held on a Sabbath at Battle Creek, and you indicate that Sister White requested that her funeral be held on the Sabbath.

It is true that three funerals were held for Sister White, one on the lawn at St. Helena, one at Richmond. These two you say you attended. The third funeral was held at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on Sabbath, and was attended by about 4,000 people. Beyond this we cannot go. Sister White did not make a request that her funeral be held on the Sabbath. This was your specific question.

Concerning the matter of Sabbath funerals we might say this. It is within my span of memory that Seventh-day Adventists have turned quite largely from holding funerals on the Sabbath day. As a boy, as I remember it in St. Helena, most of the funerals were held on Sabbath afternoon. A funeral is a service of the church. It has never been considered by Seventh-day Adventists to be out of place to conduct such a service on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a day when a larger number of people could attend a funeral, and thus pay their respects to the one who had come to the close of his life.

I think it is because funerals have become such involved affairs in more recent years, that the General Conference has given counsel that would encourage the holding of funerals on a day other than the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not necessarily to be a day of inactivity. You will recall that the Sabbath was the busiest day for the priests. There were duties performed on the Sabbath which from a casual approach it would seem could be performed on some other day. For instance, the shewbread was made on the Sabbath. You will recall that Christ in his ministry endeavored to keep before men that the Sabbath was a day in which good could be accomplished. The sick could properly be cared for and so forth.

G. C. HOLJEN-5

Back in the early days, there was a death in a very earnest Seventh-day Adventist family. The husband had the funeral on the Sabbath. Some of his brethren criticized him for doing so. Sister White wrote that she was shown in vision that those who criticized this brother for having the funeral on the Sabbath had made a mistake, and that he should not be subjected to such criticism.

I am quite in agreement with the counsel which is given today, that we hold our funerals on a day other than the Sabbath. I think this is advisable when we consider the more complicated nature of the funeral service, and the preparations which are made, floral tributes which are brought, and so forth. I trust this information will be of service to you.

With the best of wishes, I am

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary

ELLEN G. WHITE PUBLICATIONS

ALW:fs

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Handwritten notes and signatures in the bottom right corner, including a large signature that appears to be "John H. ...".