

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 170

“Should Adventists Observe the Festivals?”

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UPDATE ON MY MEDICAL CONDITION

The recovery from my colon cancer surgery that took place on February 20, 2007, has been excellent. The new challenge I am facing now is the battle against the liver cancer. The first round of treatments for my liver cancer was completed on April 11, 2007. So far I have received two chemo infusions and one microsphere ablation. Microbeads were placed with a catheter on the right lobe of the liver. I am told that these beads are very powerful like micro atomic bombs. What this means is that I have been feeling the effects of a double dosage of radiation. I feel like a bionic man with plenty of radiation power, but with limited physical strength.

In few days, on April 24, 2007, I will undergo another Pet/Cat scan test that will reveal how much cancer still remains in my liver after this first round of treatments. These results are very important because they will determine the next course of action. With the help of a projector, Dr. Seza Gulec, a leading Nuclear Oncologist who is directing my clinical treatment, will show us on April 30, the cancer situation of the liver before the treatment and after the first round of three treatments. In other cases, the liver cancer was considerably reduced after the first

round of treatments. We hope that this will be true in my case. We are looking forward with great anticipation to see the results of the Pet/Cat Scan. I will be sure to share with you the results as soon as they will be made available to us. Our daughter, Loretta, who is a professor of Nursing, will join us for the consultation on April 30, 2007.

Overall I feel quite well. I have not suffered the common side effects of chemo and microspheres. But I do not have yet my usual strength. I am operating at a lower gear. Thank God for granting me enough energy for writing this newsletter and meeting the daily demands of my ministry. Forgive me for failing to reply to some of your messages. As I get stronger, I will take time to respond to your gracious messages.

Thank You for Your Prayers and Orders

Many fellow believers from different parts of the world have sent us get-well cards, flowers, and messages, reassuring us that they are praying for us. We have been overwhelmed by the countless expressions of sympathy. This is of great encouragement to us, knowing that we can count on the intercessory prayers of so many believers.

Please keep my wife also in your prayers because this testing experience is taking its toll on her. On our part we are using the latest conventional and unconventional resources. But, after we have done our best, we can only trust in God to do the rest. Thank you for remembering us in your prayers. We are of good courage because we know that God is on our side.

A special note of thanks especially to those who have ordered my books and recordings during the past three months while I have been grounded by cancer treatments. *Prayers are very reassuring, but they do not pay the bills.* But the increased number of orders we have been receiving, have helped us to meet our financial obligations.

Frankly, I was concerned, because since I took an early retirement 6 years ago, most of our income comes from the weekend seminars. Every Saturday night people who attend my lectures, are eager to purchase

my publications and recordings. Now that the cancer treatments have grounded me for at least another two months, we are solely dependent on the orders that we receive.

We can only thank God for increasing the flow of orders, which have made it possible to pay for the additional medical expenses. Incidentally, natural supplementary products are not cheap. We spent over \$5,000.00 during the past three months to purchase a host of supplementary products that are supposed to boost my immune system and fight cancer cells. I hope that they work. The steady incoming orders have made it possible to meet these unexpected medical expenses.

As an expression of gratitude for your prayers and words of encouragement, I wish to extend you a SPECIAL ONE-TIME OFFER ON THE COMPLETE PACKAGE OF ALL MY RECORDINGS. The package consists of SIX ALBUMS for a total of 15 live video DVD powerpoint lectures and 4 CD disks with all my 17 books, articles, and audio lectures. This means that while I am grounded for cancer treatments, you can enjoy all my popular DVD powerpoint lectures in the privacy of your home or in the fellowship of your church.

The special offer is only \$100.00, instead of the regular website price of \$700.00. This offer sounds too good to be true, but it is true for the next 30 days, until May 15, 2007. For a description of each album and order information, click on this link:

<http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/albumoffer.htm> If you have a problem ordering online, simply call us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

“Should Adventist Observe the OT Festivals?”

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,

**Retired Professor of Theology and Church History,
Andrews University**

A Summary Statement

For the benefit of those who may not have time to read the whole essay, I decided to place a summary statement at the beginning.

A few of the books that I have authored during the past 30 years, have been used by uninformed people to accuse me of promoting unbiblical teachings. When *Women in the Church* came out in 1985, it seems that hell broke loose. Feminists accused me of being an Italian chauvinist opposed to the ministry and ordination of women. Nothing could be further from the truth. I firmly believe in the ministry and ordination of women who serve in official capacities in the church. But what my research shows is that the Bible clearly teaches that there is a role distinction between men and women. God has created men to be fathers and women to be mothers. This distinction applies to the home and to the church, because the church is an extended family, not a service organization. The role of a pastor is that of a spiritual father. This means that women should serve in the church as spiritual mothers, not as spiritual fathers. It is as simple as that.

Ten years later in 1995-96 when I published the two volumes on *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, several well-meaning brethren accused me of promoting the ceremonial observance of the OT Festivals. This false accusation was repropounded in the article "Should Christians Observe Israelite Festivals?" that appeared on the April 7, 2007, issue of *Adventist Review*. The article specifically mentions my name as the only Adventist scholar who believes that Christians should observe the Jewish Festivals.

This statement is grossly inaccurate, for two reasons. First, I have never promoted the ceremonial observance of the OT Festivals. I have even placed a disclaimer on page 3 of the *Fall Festivals*, saying: "*This book does not promote a ceremonial observance of the ancient Feast of Israel. Rather, it proposes to remember during the course of the year the redemptive acts of the Plan of Salvation typified by the Feasts.*"

Second, there are several Adventist scholars and church leaders today who are re-examining the spiritual and prophetic significance of the Festivals for our church. Several examples will be cited in the newsletter, including the famous statement of Ellen White "*Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them*" (PP 540-541). This means that I am not the only Adventist scholar studying the relevance of the Festivals for our church today.

MY GOAL

The goal of my research has always been to propose to our Adventist Church the development of a church calendar loosely patterned after the Spring and Fall Festivals. The Spring Festivals of Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost could become the Adventist Spring celebration of the redemption accomplished by Christ's First Advent. During the seven Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost, pastors can invite the congregation to explore more fully the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's First Advent.

The Fall Festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles, could become the Adventist Fall celebration of the events leading to the consummation of redemption. Three special Sabbaths could be linked respectively to the Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. During these three Sabbaths our church at large would be afforded an opportunity to take a closer look at our prophetic message which our pioneers developed by studying the rituals of the Day of Atonement. What I envision is an Adventist church calendar where the prophetic message of the Fall Festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles is explored afresh every Fall during three special Sabbath services. This would provide a practical opportunity every year to re-examine the relevance of our prophetic end-time message and mission.

DOES OUR ADVENTIST CHURCH NEED A RELIGIOUS CALENDAR?

My answer is yes, for two reasons. First, the current Adventist church calendar we receive from the local conferences in the USA, is promotional, not religious. It lists the projects to be supported on any given Sabbath, but it does not mention any event of the Plan of Salvation to be celebrated on any given Sabbath.

Second, most evangelical denominations have a church calendar (“liturgical calendar”) that revolves around Easter and Christmas—two festivals that derive from pagan myths and rituals, not from Scripture. All the Sundays are reckoned with reference to these two festivals. Samples are cited in the newsletter.

By contrast, our Adventist church has a unique opportunity to develop a church calendar patterned after the biblical Spring and Fall Festivals, not pagan festivals. Such a calendar would reveal the unique Adventist understanding of the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation. Especially the Sabbath services associated with the Fall Festivals, would afford a unique opportunity to REMEMBER the relevance of our end-time prophetic message.

WILL THE ADVENTIST CHURCH EVER CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RELIGIOUS CHURCH CALENDAR PATTERNED AFTER THE FESTIVALS?

The possibility is remote because any attempt to modify traditional practices is strongly rejected by “concerned brethren” as apostasy. Their prevailing assumption is that our pioneers got everything right from the beginning. Thus, any modification of traditional views or practices is unacceptable.

Then, why did I spend two years of my life writing the two volumes on *God’s Festivals in Scripture and History*, knowing that my proposal to develop an Adventist church calendar patterned after the Festivals, does not stand a chance to be considered seriously? The answer is simple. An Adventist scholar is called to investigate biblical truths, whether they are popular or unpopular, accepted or rejected. The goal is to offer something to think about to those endowed with an open and probative mind. We plant the seed, the harvest is in the hands of God.

A PLEA: PLEASE READ THIS NEWSLETTER BEFORE ACCEPTING OR REJECTING MY PROPOSAL

There is a tendency to draw our own conclusions without taking time to learn the facts. My plea is for you to read first this newsletter before deciding on the merits or demerits of the proposal of developing an Adventist church calendar patterned after the biblical Festival. If you cannot agree with me, no problem. REMEMBER THAT THIS IS ONLY A PROPOSAL. If necessary, let us disagree without becoming disagreeable to one another. This is a sign of Christian maturity.

If this newsletter stimulates your interest for a study of the biblical Festivals, we will be glad to mail you the two volumes *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, together with a free DVD album. For details and order information, see the ad at the end of this newsletter or click at this links: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/index.php?cPath=26_30

Several subscribers have asked me to comment on the article "Should Christians Observe Israelite Festivals?" that appeared on the April 7, 2007, issue of *Adventist Review*. The article is excerpted from the booklet *Festivals and the Christian Church*, authored by Angel Rodriguez, Director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. Incidentally, I highly respect Dr. Rodriguez as a foremost Adventist scholar.

The opening paragraph wrongly states that I am the only Adventist scholar who believes that Christians should observe the Jewish Festivals. The complete text reads: "Should Christians observe the Israelite festivals? This has been a much debated question among Christians but the present prevailing opinion is that they had only a typological significance that was fulfilled in Christ and his work of mediation and judgment. Among Adventist there are some who have concluded that it is necessary to observe the feasts and they have been promoting this practice among church members. In addressing this question, it is necessary to examine the biblical passages in which the subject of the Israelite feasts is discussed in order to determine their nature and purpose. Several Adventist scholars have looked into this subject and the common conclusion they have reached, *with the exception of Samuele Bacchiocchi*, is that the Bible does not expect Christians to observe the Jewish festivals" (Emphasis supplied).

The statement that I am the only Adventist scholar who believes that the Bible expects Christians to observe the Jewish festivals,” is grossly inaccurate, for two reasons.

I Do not Believe in the Ceremonial Observance of the Festivals

First, I do not believe in the ceremonial observance of the OT festivals. I have stated this fact unambiguously on page 3 of the *Fall Festivals*, saying: “This book does not promote a ceremonial observance of the ancient Feast of Israel. Rather, it proposes to remember during the course of the year the redemptive acts of the Plan of Salvation typified by the Feast.”

I have never observed the Festivals in accordance to the OT dates and rituals. The three or four times I have observed Passover or the Feast of Tabernacles, it has been with an Adventist Messianic congregation, like the one meeting on our Andrews University campus. The reason I do not believe in the ceremonial observance of the festivals, is that the NT makes it abundantly clear that we no longer abide by the cultic Levitical regulations. Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross brought to an end the sanctuary services, which included specific sacrifices for the celebration of the Festivals.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the fact that the Festivals were harvest celebrations, which were keyed to the Palestinian Spring wheat harvest and to the Fall fruit harvest. These seasons could fittingly represent great spiritual truths. This means that Passover could not be celebrated if sufficient barley could not be harvested for the priest to wave a sheaf before the Lord (Lev 23:11) on the day after Passover. If because of too much rain or the failure to intercalate the calendar, the barley was not ready, the date of Passover was moved to the following month. Since barley does not ripen in Australia, Scandinavia, or the USA at the same time as it does in Palestine, in most western countries it is impossible to follow the Palestinian agricultural dating of the Festivals.

The focus of my two volumes on *God’s Festivals in Scripture and History*, is not on the date or manner of observance of the Festivals, but on their spiritual lessons and antitypical fulfilment in NT times. Let

us not forget that our prophetic message of the cleansing of the sanctuary and investigative judgment, grew out of an intense study of the Day of Atonement by our pioneers.

Yet, no attempt has ever been made in the history of our Adventist Church to develop a Day of Atonement Sabbath, when our worldwide church takes time to reflect on what Christ is doing in heaven to bring to completion His redemptive mission. The result is that the vast majority of Adventists totally ignore this important truth, because the church offers no practical opportunity to remember on a special Sabbath the antitypical fulfilment of this Festival today. What is true of the Day of Atonement is also true of all the other Festivals, as we shall shortly see. Somehow, we seem to feel that accepting a doctrine intellectually, is more important than experiencing it practically.

Growing Interest for a Rediscovery of the Festivals

Second, there is a growing interest, not only among church members, but also among Adventist scholars for a fresh study of the OT Festivals, in order to understand the spiritual lessons that can benefit our congregations and our church at large. For example, last October 24, 2006, a consultation was held at Andrews University dealing with the topic of Jewish Festivals. I was invited to present a paper entitled “How I Came to Appreciate the Holy Days.”

An insightful paper on “The Prophetic Significance of the Old Testament Festivals,” was presented by Richard M. Davidson, Ph. D., Chairman of the OT Department of Andrews Theological Seminary. He wrote: “While it is not mandatory to keep the OT ceremonial festivals today, at the same time it is very beneficial for us to look at the compacted prophecy of the plan of salvation typified in those OT festivals, and marvel at how they have been, or are being, fulfilled in NT times.” The paper survey the antitypical and eschatological fulfilment in NT times of the Spring and Fall Festivals.

The consensus of the consultation was that while it is not mandatory to keep today the OT ceremonial festivals, it is very beneficial for us to explore how the festivals reveal the unfolding of the plan of salva-

tion, from the redemptive accomplishments of the First Advent, to the consummation of redemption at the Second Advent. Again, this has been the focus of my research, which I will summarize shortly.

Another indication of the renewed Adventist interest for the study of the Festivals is the 2003/2004 winter issue of *Shabbat Shalom*, devoted to “Festivals.” The magazine is published by the North American Division of the General Conference of SDA. The editor is Jacques B. Doukhan, Ph. D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis at Andrews University Theological Seminary. In his editorial, Prof. Doukhan writes: “The feasts help us to remember the past miracle of salvation and . . . to hope for the future. . . . Jewish festivals teach us that enjoying the gift of life and its promises is a *mitzvah*, a divine commandment to fulfill. “

In the last newsletter I reported on the special Adventist Passover celebration held on April 6-7, 2007, in Los Angeles, California. The event was co-sponsored by the Religious Liberty Departments of the Pacific Union and Southern California Conference. Elder Richard Elofer, President of the Israel Mission, was flown in from Jerusalem to lead out in this special Passover celebration.

The above examples suffice to show that there is a growing interest in the Adventist church for a fresh study of the relevance of the Festivals for today. I may have pioneered this study 12 years ago with the publication of the two volumes on *God's Festivals*, but I can hardly be blamed of being the only Adventist scholar today promoting a rediscovery of the antitypical and eschatological significance of the Festivals. The fact is that I am greatly indebted to the groundwork done by other leading Adventist scholars.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FESTIVALS FOR DEVELOPING AN ADVENTIST CHURCH CALENDAR

Why did I embarked 12 years ago into the study of the OT Festivals? A major reason is the painful awareness that our Adventist church has no religious calendar. Our church calendar, usually published by our local conferences and distributed to every family in the USA, is primari-

ly a promotional calendar, listing the various projects and programs to be supported on any given Sabbath during the course of the year. We need a promotional calendar, but we also need a religious calendar to remind us of the significant events of the Plan of Salvation to be commemorated during the course of the year.

Liturgical Calendar of Evangelical Churches

Most evangelical churches have what is called “a church year” or “liturgical calendar” that revolves around two major events, Christmas and Easter. Here is a brief explanation of *The Church Year*, posted by spirithome.com: <http://www.spirithome.com/churyear.html>

“Why is it that Christians follow a cycle of seasons and holy days? The main reason is that by following this cycle, called ‘the church year’ or ‘liturgical calendar,’ we can get into the rhythm and flow of the Christian story, to experience it, to learn it, to relive it through the telling and the doing. The church calendar helps the Christian believer to bring their faith into every day of their lives, every time of year.

“In **Advent** [five Sundays leading to Christmas], we prepare for God’s coming among us. We get ready for the happy occasion by making our own way straight, hearing John the Baptist’s call.

“In **Christmas**, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who is God with us, the ultimate Christmas gift. We remember that by that same Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, God is still with us today, and has not abandoned us in the crush of daily life.

In **Epiphany** [January 6 in the West], we celebrate Jesus’ revealing Himself to the whole world. Like the three magi with the Christ child, and those looking on when Jesus was baptized, we too are amazed at what God has done, and we realize it was not just for us, but for all.

“**Lent** begins on Ash Wednesday (which in 2007 is on 21 Feb). In Lent, we take a hard, sober look at our own role in bringing about Jesus’ death. We discover our own sin, and realize how weak and two-faced we are in facing it. We turn to God, who is the only One with the power to

forgive us and change us. In the **Paschal (or ‘Holy’) Week** which ends Lent, we relive Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (**‘Palm Sunday’**), His last commands and His being seized (**‘Maundy Thursday’**), then abandoned, and executed (**‘Good Friday’**), and then the stillness of the tomb. The bleak days of Christ’s death are called by the Latin “Triduum” (‘three days’). Yet even so we look toward **Easter** morning and the empty tomb, where even death does not stop God’s forgiveness, and in fact helped to put it into effect.”

Most evangelical churches publish their Church Year Calendar, listing for each Sunday the event commemorated and the recommended Scripture reading. For example, this is the *Advent* portion of the 2006-2007 church calendar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Advent: First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2006

- Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 25:1-10 (1), 1 Thess 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-36. Color: Blue

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2006

- Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9, Luke 1:68-79 (78), Philippians 1:3-11, Luke 3:1-6. Color: Blue

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2006

- Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6 (6), Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18. Color: Blue

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2006

- Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1: 46b-55 (52) or Psalm 80:1-7 (7), Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-45 (46-55). Color: Blue

Christmas: Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2006

Set I – Christmas Eve

- Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96 (11), Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14 (15-20). Color: White

Nativity of Our Lord

December 25, 2006

Christmas Day

• Isaiah 62:6-12, Psalm 97 (11), Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20.

Color: White

The calendar continues linking each Sunday to such events as the Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. As mentioned earlier, the church calendar of most evangelical churches revolves around these major events. Each Sunday is linked to these events by means of assigned Scripture readings (Lectionary).

Puritans Anti-Feasts Attitude

The Adventist church has never developed a religious calendar, though some congregations have adopted Christmas and Easter celebrations. The reason is that our church, like a few other evangelical churches, still suffer today from the radical anti-feast attitude of the Puritans who swept away all religious holy days except Sunday.

The Puritans viewed the church calendar, which was filled with saints' days and Marian feasts instituted by the Roman Catholic Church, as indicative of the apostasy into which the church had fallen. To rid the church of all the pagan superstitions which had become part of the popular piety, the Puritans did away with all the annual holy days. They believed that other days would compete with, rather than enhance, the observance of the Lord's Day. But, the Festivals of the Old Testament do not detract from the weekly Sabbath, but add importance to it, since they are patterned after it.

The effect of the Puritans' rejection of all annual holy days, including Passover and Pentecost, was the secularization of the calendar. Gradually a new nationalistic calendar was developed which celebrates, not God's saving acts, but national heroes or events: Washington's Birthday, Independence Day, Mother's Day, Labor Day, and Veterans' Day. Even Thanksgiving, which is celebrated in November at about the same time as the harvest Festival of Tabernacles, is detached from its Biblical roots and viewed exclusively as a national holiday. By making our

primary feasts nationalistic rather than theological, we have fallen into a cultural pattern which subordinates the Christian faith to nationalistic goals and aspirations.

We do not need to fear the agricultural Feasts of the Spring and Fall harvests of the Old Testament, because it is good and proper to thank the Lord of the harvest. Why should Thanksgiving be celebrated as a secular holiday when we have Biblical reasons for observing it as the Feast of Tabernacles? “Indeed,” to use the words of James Jordan, “how do we dare to keep it out of the Church?”

More important still, we do not need to fear the soteriological cycle of the Biblical Feasts, because they provide us with a marvelous opportunity to rejoice during the course of the year in the specific works of God and Christ for our redemption. The fact that God’s calendar was perverted with the worship of saints, Mary, and pagan practices is not a valid reason for rejecting its proper use. For some Protestants, it seems more important to be unlike the Catholic Church, than true to the Bible. To respect the soteriological cycle of the Biblical Feasts does not mean to fall into legalism, but to listen to the teachings of the Word of God.

Festivals Can Enhance the Adventist Prophetic Message

We noted that the church calendar of most evangelical revolves around Easter and Christmas—two festivals that derive from pagan myths and rituals. By contrast, our Adventist church has a unique opportunity to develop a church calendar patterned after the biblical Spring and Fall Festivals. Such a calendar would reveal the unique Adventist understanding of the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation.

The Spring Festivals of Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost could become the Adventist Spring celebration of the redemption accomplished by Christ’s First Advent. During the seven Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost, pastors can invite the congregation to explore more fully the meaning of Christ’s suffering and death, His resurrection, ascension, inauguration of His heavenly ministry, and His sending of the Holy Spirit. Each of these saving acts is relevant to our Christian life today.

Most Christians wonder: “What on earth is Christ doing in heaven?” A special emphasis Sabbath on Christ’s heavenly ministry, can help believers understand that Christ is not on vacation recovering from His earthly mission, but “He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). Through His intercessory heavenly ministry, the benefits of the Cross are extended to believers to the end of time.

The Fall Festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles

For the sake of brevity, this newsletter focuses solely on the Fall Festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles, because they have special relevance for the Adventist Church. They typify the end-time prophetic message God has called our Adventist church to proclaim to the world. This means that by highlighting these festivals through special Sabbath church services in the Fall of each year, we can constantly remind ourselves of our prophetic message and mission. What I envision is an Adventist church calendar where the prophetic message of the Fall Festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles are remembered on special Sabbath services.

The order of the Feasts is significant because it reveals the sequential order of the unfolding of God’s redemptive acts. The historic events commemorated by the feasts would be completely confused if they occurred in any other order. The Feast of Tabernacles which commemorates the divine sheltering of the Israelites during their journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land, could not have been observed before Passover, which commemorates the deliverance from Egypt.

The fact that all three Fall Feasts fell in the seventh month, may well reflect the importance that Scripture attaches to the septenary cycle as the symbol of the perfection and completion of God’s creative and redemptive accomplishments. The number seven also is woven into the Biblical calendar. The Sabbath is observed every seventh day, the sabbatical year every seven years, the jubilee year every seven weeks of years. Passover opens the religious calendar with a seven-day observance of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. Seven weeks after Passover comes the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost.

The seventh month, Tishri, contains the most holy days of the Hebrew calendar, with the feasts of Trumpet, Atonement, and Tabernacles. The

religious calendar closes with the Feast of Tabernacle which lasts for seven days. It appears that just as the seventh day marks the completion and culmination of creation, so the three Fall Feasts of the seventh month point to the consummation and culmination of redemption

The founders of the Adventist church understood that the Spring Festivals were types which were fulfilled in connection with the first Advent of Christ, and that Fall Festivals are also types that find their fulfillment in the events related to the Second Advent. "In like manner," writes Ellen G. White, "the types which relate to the second advent [Fall Feasts] must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service." (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 399-400).

But, the focus of Adventist pioneers was primarily the typology of the Day of Atonement. They studied with great diligence the ritual of the Day of Atonement in order to establish the antitypical fulfillment of the cleansing of the sanctuary as predicted in Daniel 8:14. Their overriding concern to understand the antitypical fulfillment of the Day of Atonement caused them to overlook the contribution of the Feasts of Trumpets and Tabernacles to the overall understanding of the consummation of redemption.

The result was, for example, that they developed the doctrine of the investigative judgment solely on the typology of the Day of Atonement, largely ignoring the typological function of the Feast of Trumpets. Thus, they ended up squeezing many events on the Day of Atonement: the beginning of the investigative judgment, the judgment process, the completion of the judgment, the final disposition of sin, the Return of Christ, and the destruction of Satan. Moreover, they made no attempt to establish a special Atonement Sabbath Day, when church members at large could learn and experience more fully what Christ is doing in heaven to bring to consummation His redemptive mission.

Our challenge is to build upon the study initiated by our Pioneers, by exploring more fully the prophetic message of the Festivals and their relevance for our Christian life today. More important still, is the development of a church calendar patterned after the Spring and Fall Festivals. Such a calendar would afford an opportunity each year to remember and experience on designated Sabbath days the milestones of the Plan of Salvation.

Did the Festivals Come to an End with Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross?

A major objection against the proposal of this newsletter, is the assumption the annual Feasts came to an end with the sacrifice of Christ, because

they were connected with the sacrificial system of the Temple. I held this view for long time myself. But gradually I came to realize that the continuity or discontinuity of the Feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by the scope of their typology.

If the Feasts had typified only the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's first Advent, then obviously their function would have terminated at the Cross. But, if the Feasts foreshadow also the consummation of redemption to be accomplished by Christ at His second Advent, then their function continues in the Christian church, though with a new meaning and manner of observance.

It came as a pleasant surprise to discover that the typology and function of the Feasts reach beyond the Cross to the ultimate consummation of redemption. For the sake of brevity, let us look only to Passover. The typology of Passover was initially fulfilled when Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, was sacrificed to deliver us from the bondage of sin. Yet there is still a future and ultimate fulfillment of Passover at the End, when Christ will deliver His people from the great tribulation and invite them to participate in "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9).

Christ Himself pointed to this future fulfillment of Passover when He said: "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat of it *until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God*" (Luke 22:16; emphasis supplied). In this statement Christ makes it clear that the ultimate fulfillment of Passover will be at the End with the establishment of God's kingdom.

Support for this conclusion is provided by the widespread observance of Passover in the Apostolic Church. Ellen White acknowledges this fact in her comment on Acts 20:6: ("We sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread")—"At Philippi Paul tarried *to keep the Passover*. . . . The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle's converts, and *during the eight days of the feast* he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them" (*Acts of the Apostles*, pp 390-391).

Anyone familiar with the history of the Early Church knows that Passover was an important celebration. A major controversy erupted during the second half of the second century, when Bishop Victor of Rome, tried to impose the Easter Sunday dating on the Asian Christians. Polycrates, the leader of the Asian Province, convened in A. D. 196 all the bishops, and

they unanimously refused to accept Easter Sunday. Bishop Victor responded drastically by declaring “all the brethren there wholly excommunicated” (Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 9).

Adventists who insists that the observance of Passover and other Festivals terminated at the Cross, ignore the historical reality of their continued observance during the Apostolic and Post-apostolic period. The two volumes *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, offer considerable information on how the early Christians celebrated Passover and other festivals. In fact, my doctoral dissertation shows that the change from Passover to Easter Sunday is closely related to the change from Sabbath to Sunday.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS IN THE OT AND NT

Let us now look at the Fall Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacle from both the OT and NT perspective. Our goal is to ascertain how the prophetic message of these Feasts relate to the prophetic message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Our study has shown that both in the OT and NT the judgment begins, not on the Day of Atonement, but with the Feast of the Trumpets. The name of the feast is derived from the blowing of the trumpets (*shofar*) which was its distinguishing characteristic. The massive blowing of the *shofar* on the first day of the seventh month (*Rosh Hashanah*), was understood by the Jews as the beginning of their trial before the heavenly court where books would be opened and the destiny of each individual would be decided. The trial lasted ten days until the Day of Atonement (*Yom kippur*) when God would dispose of their sins in a permanent way.

The blowing of the *shofar* during the Ten Days of Penitence served not only to call upon the Jews to repent but also to reassure them that God would remember and vindicate them on the day of judgment. The ten days preceding the Day of Atonement were not an abstract theological truth, but an existential reality lived out with real trumpet-calls to repentance, trusting in God's mercy to vindicate them. The Jews developed some interesting customs and ceremonies to help them live out their belief that God would judge them with mercy during the ten days preceding the Day of Atonement. You will find an informative discussion of the Jewish customs on pages 68-78 of *God's Festivals*, vol 2, *The Fall Festivals*.

In the New Testament the themes of the Feast of the Trumpet are frequently found in the book of Revelation. The same holds true for the Fall Feasts of Atonement and Tabernacles, both of which are clearly alluded to in

Revelation. The reason the imagery of the Fall Feasts is present especially in Revelation is to be found in the fact that these feasts typify the consummation of redemption which is the focus of the book.

Both Prof. Jon Paulien and Prof. Richard Davidson note the correlation between the OT Feast of Trumpet and the announcement of the judgment at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation (Rev 11:18) (See *The Fall Festivals* pp. 102-103). The seventh trumpet, which corresponds to the Feast of the Trumpet of the seventh month, is unique because it announces the beginning of the judgment as part of the consummation of redemption.

“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. . . . The nations raged, but thy wrath came, and *the time for the dead to be judged*, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth” (Rev 11:15, 18; Emphasis supplied).

It is noteworthy that the announcement of the judgment is followed by the opening of the most Holy Place of the heavenly temple where the ark of the covenant is seen (Rev 11:19). This is a clear allusion to the Day of Atonement which finds its antitypical fulfillment in the coming of Christ as indicated by the manifestation of the cosmic signs of the End. “There were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” (Rev 11:19; cf. Rev 16:18; 6:12-14). The association of the cosmic signs of the End with the ritual of the Day of Atonement suggests that Christ’s coming represents the antitypical fulfillment of the disposition of sin typified by the Day of Atonement.

The Feast of Trumpets in the Old and New Testaments reveals that God is not in the business to punish but to save. He uses attention-catching methods to warn and lead His people to repentance before executing His judgments. In the Old Testament, God summoned His people by means of the annual trumpets blasting to repent and amend their lives in view of the judgment going on in heaven. In the New Testament, God sounds the same clarion call to mankind by the flying angel of Revelation who proclaims with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come” (Rev 14:7).

Christians today, like God’s people in ancient times, need to hear the annual trumpet-call of the Feast of Trumpets to stand trial before God and

seek for His cleansing grace. After all, Christians, too, need to be reminded periodically that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body” (2 Cor 5:10). A special Sabbath linked to the Feast of Trumpets provides a much needed annual wake up call to prepare oneself to stand before God’s judgment by repenting and forsaking sinful ways. Perhaps the church could set aside a *Week of Penitence*, starting with the Feast of Trumpets Sabbath. This could be the equivalent of a Fall Week of Prayer, with the emphasis on introspection, repentance, confession, and forsaking of sin in preparation for Christ’s Coming.

A question I often asked my students during the 26 years of Bible teaching at Andrews University, was: “How many of you are familiar with the Adventist doctrine of the pre-Advent judgment?” The response was surprising, because less than 10% of the students had ever studied this doctrine. It is not surprising that this is one of the most neglected and disputed doctrines in our Adventist church today.

A special annual Sabbath that focuses on the message of the Feast of the Trumpets for today, can help resolve the neglect or skepticism about the final judgment. It can remind us annually that the heavenly court will soon complete the judgment process, and Christ will come to cleanse the faithful, to punish the wicked, and to bind Satan (Azazel) before destroying him “in the lake of fire” (Rev 20:10).

This reassuring message inspires us to live godly lives with joy, confidence, and hope while “awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). My proposal is to translate our beliefs into practical experience. To the extent that we live out our beliefs in our church life and witnessing, to the same degree they will remain relevant to our lives.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN THE OT AND NT

The second Fall Festival of special significance to the prophetic message of the Adventist church is the Day of Atonement. We noted earlier that it was the diligent study of the rituals of the Day of Atonement that led our pioneers to establish the antitypical fulfillment of the cleansing of the sanctuary predicted in Daniel 8:14. But, no attempt was ever made by our pioneers to translate this doctrine into an existential reality by linking it to a special Day of Atonement Sabbath in our church calendar. This means that most converts to our Adventist church will learn about this doctrine for the first, most likely the last time, during an evangelistic crusade.

The Day of Atonement in the OT. The Day of Atonement was the grand climax of the religious year in ancient Israel. The rites performed on that day concluded the atoning process of the sins of the Israelites by removing them permanently from the sanctuary. The judgment process that began on the first day of the seventh month (Feast of the Trumpet), terminated 10 days later on the Day of Atonement when God executed His judgment by giving life to those who had confessed their sins and availed themselves of the divine provision for their atonement. It was also a day of death for impenitent sinners who rejected God's provision for the cleansing of their sins.

The emphasis of the Day of Atonement on judgment and cleansing, sin and atonement, fasting and prayer was designed to drive home important lessons to the Israelites. It showed them the seriousness of sin and the divine provision for its eradication through confession, sacrifice, recording, judgment, and final disposition. It taught the Israelites that before their sins could be cleansed and permanently eliminated on the Day of Atonement, they had to be repented of, forsaken, and judged by the heavenly court.

The Day of Atonement in the NT. In the New Testament, the Day of Atonement is alluded to several times, especially in the books of Hebrews and Revelation. Its antitypical fulfillment is associated especially with the cleansing and removal of sin by Christ at His Second Coming. Hebrews recognizes that the work of cleansing and removing sins typified by the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement has a *past*, a *present*, and a *future* aspect. In the *past*, Christ "*has appeared* once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26). In the *present* ("now"), Christ "*appears* in the presence of God on our behalf" (9:24). In the *future*, Christ "*will appear* a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (9:28). The last of these is accomplished by Christ at His Second Advent when He will appear, like the High Priest at the close of the Day of Atonement, not to atone for sins but to save the believers and punish the unbelievers.

The past, the present, and the future ministries of Christ are in Hebrews ideologically connected because they are all dependent upon the same "once for all" sacrifice on the Cross. It is the same atoning sacrifice that enables Christ to fulfill the two phases of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary: intercession and judgment.

In Revelation, the vision of the Day of Atonement (Rev 11:19) occurs immediately after the announcement of the judgment (Rev 11:18), with the opening of the most Holy Place of the heavenly temple where the ark of the

covenant is seen . “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of the covenant was seen within the temple” (Rev 11:19). This is the first and clearest allusion to the Day of Atonement because only on that day the door to the Most Holy Place was open and the High Priest could see “the ark of the covenant” while he officiated in front of it.

The opening of the Most Holy Place of the heavenly temple on the Day of Atonement is accompanied by the manifestation of the cosmic signs of the Second Advent. “There were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” (Rev 11:19; cf. Rev 16:18; 6:12-14). The association of the cosmic signs of the Second Advent with the ritual of the Day of Atonement suggests that Christ’s coming is seen as the antitypical fulfillment of the disposition of sin typified by the Day of Atonement. The sequential order in Revelation, namely, announcement of the judgment, opening of the Most Holy Place, and the Second Advent, corresponds to the progression from the typology of the Feast of Trumpets to that of the Day of Atonement.

The outcome of the coming of Christ is also similar to that of the Day of Atonement. Christ destroys the wicked by His “sword” (Rev 19:21), a reminder of the impenitent who were “cut off” on the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:29). Satan is bound and thrown into “the pit” (Rev 20:3), a reminder of the sending of Azazel into the desert (Lev 16:21). The righteous are resurrected and reign with Christ, a reminder of the cleansing of God’s people on the Day of Atonement which resulted in the jubilee celebration of new beginnings (Lev 25:9). This amazing correspondence between the typology of the Day of Atonement and its antitypical fulfillment at Christ’s Return, shows how important is the Day of Atonement in the New Testament for understanding the events associated with the coming of Christ.

The Day of Atonement in the Old and New Testaments embodies the Good News of God’s provision for the cleansing of sins and restoration to fellowship with Him through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. This is an important message that our Adventist Church could proclaim more fully in the Fall at a specially designated Atonement Day Sabbath. At a time when many are experiencing the crushing isolation of sin, an Atonement Day Sabbath can offer a message of hope. It reassures Christians that Christ will soon appear the second time, like the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, to punish unbelievers, to bind Satan, to cleanse believers and restore them to an harmonious relationship with Him. Such a hope gives us reasons to encourage “one another, and all the more as . . . [we] see the Day drawing near” (Heb 10:25).

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN THE OT AND NT

The third Fall Festival of special significance to the prophetic message of the Adventist church is the Feast of Tabernacle. This was the most joyous festival celebration in Old Testament times. It was commonly known as “the Feast of Ingathering — *asif*” (Ex 23:16; 34:22) and “the Feast of Booths — *sukkot*” (Deut 16:13, 16; Lev 23:34). The Hebrew *sukkot*, which literally means “booths” or “huts,” is rendered in the Latin Vulgate as *tabernacula*, from which we derive the English designation of the feast as “Tabernacles.”

The Feast of Tabernacles in the OT. The two names of the feast reflect its dual meanings and functions. With reference to the harvest, it is called “the Feast of Ingathering” (Ex 23:16; 34:22) because it is a thanksgiving celebration for the blessings harvest. With reference to the history of Israel, it is called “the Feast of Booths” (Lev 23:34, 43; Deut 16:13, 16; 31:10; Ezra 3:4) because it commemorated God’s protection of the people as they dwelt in booths during their sojourn in the wilderness. Both of these features are preserved in the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The observance of the Feast of Booths at the close of the Fall harvest made it possible for the Israelites to have a double thanksgiving celebration: thanksgiving for the blessing of the harvest and for God’s protection through the sojourning in the wilderness. These dual themes of *past* and *present* divine protection and blessings, served to nourish the hope for a *future* Messianic restoration.

The distinguishing characteristics of the feast was the dwelling in booths for the duration of the feast (Lev 23:40, 42-43). Various branches of leafy trees were used to build booths that would house the people for the duration of the feast. Living in booths served as a reminder of God’s protection during the forty years of wandering in the desert. (Lev 23:42). The temporary booths symbolized the human need to depend upon God for His provision of food, water, and shelter. This applies to our spiritual life as well, for without the life-giving provisions of divine grace, our spiritual life would be a scorching desert.

Another major ritual of the Feast of Booths was the waving of a bundle of willow, myrtle, and palm branches, which were tied together and waved in rejoicing during the feast. This waving served to express joy, thanksgiving, and praise to God for the material blessings of the harvest and the spiritual blessing of His past and present protection.

Another significant ceremony was the nightly illumination of the Temple's Court of Women with gigantic candelabra which provided light for the nightly festivities. This provided an ideal setting for Christ to reveal Himself as the Light of the world (John 8:12).

The Feast of Tabernacles in the NT. The rich Old Testament typology of the Feast of Tabernacles finds in the New Testament both a *Christological* and an *eschatological* fulfillment. The themes of the Feast of Tabernacles are used in the Gospels to reveal the incarnation and mission of Christ and in the book of Revelation to represent God's protection of His people through the trials and tribulation of this present life until they reach the heavenly Promised Land. There God will shelter the redeemed with the booth of His protective presence (Rev 7:15) and dwell with them for all eternity (Rev 21:3).

In his Gospel, John introduces the nature and mission of Christ by employing the metaphor of the "booth" of the Feast of Tabernacles. He explains that Christ, the Word, who was with God in the beginning (John 1:1), manifested Himself in this world in a most tangible way, by pitching His tent in our midst: "And the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, as of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14). The Greek verb *skenoo* used by John means "to pitch tent, encamp, tabernacle, dwell in a tent." It is rendered in the Latin Vulgate as *tabernacula*, from which we derive the English "tabernacle." The allusion is clearly to the Feast of Tabernacles when the people dwelt in temporary booths.

John chose the imagery of the Feast of Booths to describe the Messiah's first coming to His people, since the feast celebrates the dwelling of God among His people. Being the feast of thanksgiving for God's willingness to protect His people with the tabernacle of His presence during the wilderness sojourning, it could serve fittingly to portray Christ's willingness to become a human being and pitch His tent among us in order to become our Savior.

Christ's Birth at the Time of the Feast of Tabernacles

The connection between Christ's birth and the Feast of Tabernacles has been recognized not only by modern authors but also by early Christian writers who associate the Feast of the Nativity with the true Feast of Tabernacles. Several scholarly studies suggests that the Feast of Tabernacles in September/October provides Christians today with a much more accurate Biblical timing and typology for celebrating Christ's birth than the pagan dating of December 25th. (See Newsletter no. 161). The latter date is not

only removed from the actual time of Christ's birth, but also is derived from the pagan celebration of the return of the sun after the winter solstice.

The two suggestive ceremonies of the water libation and night illumination of Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles provide the setting for Christ's revelation of His nature and mission. He is the living water (John 7:37-38) typified by the water ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles. He is also the Light of the World (John 8:12) typified by the night illumination of the Temple during the feast. Indeed, through Christ the blessing typified by the Feast of Tabernacles have become a reality for every believer.

The Feast of Tabernacles Prefigures Glorious Destiny of God's People

The themes of the Feast of Tabernacles serve not only to reveal the nature and mission of Christ, but also to depict the glorious destiny of God's people. In Revelation 7:9-17 and 21:1 to 22:5, the major themes of the Feast of Tabernacles are effectively used to portray the final ingathering of God's people in their harvest home. The redeemed are described as bearing palm branches which is a feature of Tabernacles (Rev 7:9). Their song "Salvation belongs to our God" (Rev 7:10)," recalls the cry of *hosanna* of Psalm 118:25 which was used at the feast.

The reference to God erecting a booth over His people with His presence (Rev 7:15), is a clear allusion to God's protection over Israel in the wilderness. The promise of "springs of living water" (Rev 7:17; 22:1) and of the continuous light of God's glory (Rev 21:23), are allusions to the two central ceremonies of the feast, water pouring and the night illumination, both of which from the time of Zechariah had assumed a Messianic significance. The ultimate fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles is in the new earth when the saints are gathered in their harvest home and God will shelter them with the "booth" of His presence for all eternity (Rev 21:3).

Since the Temple of Jerusalem no longer stood at the time of John's writings, the meaning of the feast must have been kept alive by its observance in the synagogues and Christian churches. John hardly could have used so effectively the themes of the Feast of Tabernacles to portray the consummation of redemption, if the feast was unknown in the Christian churches of Asia Minor.

In her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Ellen White devotes a whole chapter to "The Annual Feasts." Reflecting on their value for Israelites and Christians today, she writes: "**Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them.** As the children of Israel celebrated the deliver-

ance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeying from Egypt, so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth” (pp. 540-541). In this statement Ellen White clearly recommends the spiritual observance of the Feast of Tabernacles by the church today. This is in essence what I am proposing through this newsletter and especially the books *God’s Festivals in Scripture and History*.

Summing up, we can say that the Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the redemption already accomplished through Christ’s first Advent and typifies the final restoration that will be realized at the second Advent. The feast, then, unites the past redemption to the future restoration. It affords the opportunity to celebrate in the present the salvation and protection Christ has already provided us, while we look forward to the future consummation of our redemption that awaits us in God’s eternal Kingdom.

The Significance of the Fall Feasts for Today

The preceding typological survey of the Fall Feasts offers the basis for a few final reflections on their relevance for today. The three feasts of the seven month reveal a progression in the eschatological unfolding of redemptive history. The Feast of Trumpets announces the beginning of the judgment in heaven which calls people on earth to repent. The Day of Atonement points to the final disposition of sins that Christ will accomplish at His Second Coming. The Feast of Tabernacles typifies the joyful celebration for the providential way the Lord has led His people to the Promised Land, the new earth.

In a sense, the three Fall Feasts typify also the three steps leading to the consummation of Christ’s redemptive ministry: ***repentance, cleansing, and rejoicing*** for the final restoration. The Feast of Trumpets represents God’s last call to *repentance* while the destiny of God’s people is being reviewed by the heavenly court during the antitypical ten days preceding the Day of Atonement. We refer to this period as the “Pre-Advent Judgment.” The Day of Atonement typifies Christ’s final act of *cleansing* that will be accomplished at His coming when He will cleanse His people of their sins and will place all accountability on Satan (Azazel). The cleansing accomplished by Christ at His Return makes it possible to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles which foreshadows the *rejoicing* at the inauguration of a new life in a new world.

On a more practical plane, the Fall Feasts can give substance to our faith by reminding us that our relationship to God is based, not only on the profession, but also on the practice of our faith. At the final judgment, Christ will invite into His kingdom “not every one who says to me ‘Lord, Lord . . . but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt 7:21).

By summoning us to prepare for the final judgment, the Fall Feasts can give seriousness to our living. They remind us that our thoughts, words, deeds, and attitudes count for eternity. They teach us that the final judgment will reveal whether we have lived self-centered lives, ignoring God’s moral principles, or God-centered lives, reflecting His moral values. As Christians today, we need to be reminded of the message of the final judgment, and a church calendar with Sabbath services focusing prophetic message of the Fall Feast, affords a practical opportunity every year to reflect on our mission to proclaim: “Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment has come” (Rev 14:7).

Conclusion

My research on the biblical Festivals was never intended to promote the ceremonial observance of the Spring and Fall Festivals. The NT makes it abundantly clear that Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross brought to an end the sanctuary services, which included specific sacrifices for the celebration of the Festivals.

Instead, my intent has always been to propose to our Adventist Church the development of a church calendar loosely patterned after the Spring and Fall Festivals. Such a calendar would have both a *didactic* and *evangelistic* function. *Didactically*, it would teach our members to appreciate more fully the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation from the redemption typified by the Spring Festivals, to the consummation of salvation, represented by the Fall Festivals.

Evangelistically, a church calendar patterned after the Biblical Festivals, can effectively serve to explain the biblical basis for our prophetic end-time message. Visitors worshipping in an Adventist church on the Sabbath, will soon learn about the unique Adventist understanding of the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation.

The adoption of this proposal by the global church is nearly impossible. But no one can prevent a local church to develop its own religious calendar. Adventist churches in the USA have considerable freedom to develop their calendar. Some churches plan their calendar a year ahead, deciding on topics and speakers. It could very well be that after reading this newsletter, a few pastors may see some value in our proposal, and decide to develop their own local religious calendar. At this point this is the best I can hope for.

Your comments and reactions are welcomed, but keep in mind that I am receiving radiation treatments that sap some of my energies. This means that there might be a delay in my reply. Thank you for your understanding.

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SPECIAL OFFER ON THE TWO VOLUMES OF *GOD'S FESTIVALS IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY*

This newsletter on “Should Adventists Observe the Festivals?” offers a unique opportunity to extend to our subscribers a special offer on the two volumes of *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*. These two volumes deal with the very topic we have discussed in this newsletter.

The first volume, on *The Spring Festivals*, shows how Passover and Pentecost commemorate the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's First Advent, namely, Christ's atoning death, His resurrection, ascension, inauguration of His heavenly ministry, and sending of the Holy Spirit. The second volume, *The Fall Festivals*, explains how the Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles, point to the consummation of redemption, namely, the judgment, the final disposition of sin, the second Advent, and the restoration of this world.

God's Festivals in Scripture and History challenges congregations to develop a church calendar patterned after the religious calendar God gave to Israel. Such a calendar would not be bound to the exact dates of the OT Fes-

tivals, since these were keyed to the Palestinian seasons, which are different, for example, from the seasons in the USA. Barley does not ripen in the USA in March as in Palestine. The focus would be, not on the exact date, but on the spiritual message of each Feast to be remembered on special emphasis Sabbath.

The aim is to remember during the course of the year the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's First and Second Advents, as typified by the OT Feasts. We cannot preach the whole Bible in one sermon. We cannot celebrate the whole story of redemption in one Sabbath. A church calendar patterned after the calendar of Israel can help to do justice to all the great saving acts of God.

A church calendar is more than an annual cycle of recurring festivals. It provides an opportunity to experience afresh what God has done in the past, is doing in the present, and will do in the future. It enables us to take the time which God has created and offer it back to God through Jesus Christ who has redeemed it.

The two volumes of *God's Festivals in Scripture and History* and the accompanying DVD album, are ideal witnessing tools. They will help both your church members and friends to appreciate more fully the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation from redemption to the final restoration. Your help in promoting and distributing this timely set of two volumes is greatly appreciated.

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Until now Prof. Paulien books and articles were available only in a printed form, often unavailable at local ABC stores. In view of my indebtedness to Prof. Paulien's scholarship, I have offered to help him to place all of his books and articles on a CD disk. This makes it possible with the ACROBAT global search, to locate immediately what he has written on biblical texts or current topics.

The new CD Album contains a dozen of Prof. Paulien's books, scores of his articles, and his powerpoint outlines of the book of Revelation. You will find this collection to be a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. Prof. Paulien examines fundamental biblical beliefs in a profound and yet popular way.

The special offer for the new CD ALBUM, which includes Prof. Paulien's books, articles, and powerpoint outlines of the book of Revelation, is only \$40.00 instead of the regular price of \$60.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

To order the newly released CD ALBUM with all of Prof. Paulien books and articles, simply click here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/PaulienAD/>

If you have a problem ordering online, email us your order at <bacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>, giving us your address, credit card number, and expiration date. You can also order by phone, calling us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

SPECIAL OFFER ON THE LATEST DVD ALBUM WITH THE SABBATH AND SECOND ADVENT POWERPOINT SEMINARS

While undergoing cancer treatment for the next few weeks, I will be unable to present my popular powerpoint Sabbath and Advent Seminars. But the good thing is that recently these two seminars have been professionally recorded by a TV crew here at Andrews University. This means that you do not have to wait for me to come to your church. If your church has a DVD player and a projector, the whole congregation can enjoy these timely messages immediately.

The DVD ALBUM consists of 10 DVD powerpoint lectures on the Sabbath and Second Advent which I presents in churches and schools across North America and overseas. Each lecture is delivered with about 100 powerpoint slides professionally prepared. If you have not had the opportunity to attend one of my seminars, you will enjoy listening to my passionate and compelling presentation of the Sabbath and Second Advent in the privacy of your home.

You can preview a few minutes of these timely messages, simply by clicking on this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/preview.html> If you have DSL service, the downloading time is less than two minutes. To view these digital clips, your computer must have QUICK TIME software. If you need to install QUICK TIME, you can download it freely from the web simply by clicking <http://www.apple.com/quick-time/mac.html>

You will be impressed by the clarity of the 1000 slides used for the 10 lectures. The reason for their clarity is that the editor spent a month to insert manually each slide during the editing process. This has been an expensive project, costing me over \$10,000.00. I have worked on this project during the past 10 years, making three different recordings. My goal has been to offer clear, visual, and compelling lectures on the Sabbath and Second Advent.

Topics Covered by the latest DVD Album:

- The gripping testimony of my search for the Sabbath at a Vatican University in Rome:
 - The discoveries I made in Vatican libraries on the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity. You will see some of the documents and pictures of the Popes largely responsible for promoting the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday.
 - Practical principles on how to keep the Sabbath to experience mental, physical, and spiritual renewal.
 - An update report on the recent Sabbath/Sunday developments. You will learn about the latest attacks against the Sabbath and the unprecedented rediscovery of the Sabbath by scholars, church leaders, and congregations of different denominations.
 - An informative Bible Study on the certainty and imminence of Christ's Return. The lecture discusses the unprecedented fulfilment of end-time prophecies.
 - A practical meditation on how to live in the joyful expectancy of a soon-coming Savior.
 - As an extra bonus the album includes also a two-hours sacred concert entitled THE SABBATH IN SONGS. With the help of two gifted lyric tenors, I presents the message and blessings of the Sabbath for today with words and songs. I do the speaking and the two tenors do the

singing. The recording was professionally done at a TV studio in South Bend, Indiana.

The history of this DVD album goes back about 10 years, when *Amazing Facts* first recorded only 4 lectures at the Sacramento Central SDA Church. In seeking to improve the visual quality of the lectures, a new recording was done about 5 years later in Dallas, Texas, by our Adventist Media Center. Since then, I worked hard to increase the number of the lectures and to produce about 500 new powerpoint slides to enhance the visual quality of the presentations. This called for a new recording that was done recently at Andrews University.

Special Offer and Order Information

Your special offer on this latest recording, consisting of 10 DVD powerpoint lectures on the Sabbath and Second Advent, is only \$50.00, instead of the regular price of \$150.00. The special \$50.00 price includes the airmail expenses to any foreign country.

You can order **the latest DVD Album on the SABBATH and SECOND ADVENT for only \$50.00**, instead of the regular price of \$150.00, in four different ways:

(1) Online: By clicking here: http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=23&products_id=48

(2) Phone: By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

(3) Email: By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

(4) Regular Mail: By mailing a check for \$50.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

INCREDIBLE NEW OFFERS ON HITACHI PROJECTORS

HITACHI has given us an additional discount on some of their projectors to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. This is the special offer on the following three models:

CP-X260 HIGH RESOLUTION 2500 LUMENS - Only \$1095.00

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CP-X444 HIGH RESOLUTION 3200 LUMENS - Only \$1695.00

Previous SDA price for the 3200 lumens was \$3295.00.

CP-X1250 HIGH RESOLUTION 4500 LUMENS Only \$3795.00

Previous SDA price for the 4500 lumens was \$4900.00.

WARRANTY: The above prices include a 3 years 24/7 replacement warranty worth about \$285.00.

You can order the HITACHI projectors online by clicking at this link:

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THE SMALLEST AND MOST POWERFUL REMOTE PRESENTER

If you are looking for an outstanding REMOTE for your Power-Point presentations, you will be pleased to know HONEYWELL has just come out with the smallest and most powerful remote in the market.

The size of the transmitter is smaller than a credit card. You can stick it inside the palm of your hand and nobody can see it. I tested the remote in an open environment, and the radio signal can go up to 400 feet of distance. IT IS INCREDIBLE! The transmitter has three buttons: forward, backward, and laser.

You can order online the new POWERPOINT PRESENTER simply by clicking here: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=27&products_id=67

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DOES YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL NEED A SCREEN?

If your church/school is looking for a screen, the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY, the largest manufacture of screens in the world, has agreed to offer their line of screens to our Adventist churches and schools at about 30% discount.

The procedure is very simple. Visit the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY website at <http://www.da-lite.com>. You will see hundreds of models of screens with their respective prices. Once you find the screen that you need, give us the model number by phone (269) 471-2915 or email your request <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com> We will forward your order immediately to DA-LITE that will ship the screen directly to your address. You will receive the screen at about 30% discount.

A NEW TOWNHOME COMMUNITY NEAR TO THE CAMPUS OF ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

If you are planning to move to Andrews University, you will be pleased to learn about a new Townhome Community being developed less than a mile away from the campus of Andrews University.

For a description and a picture of the Townhome Units, click at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/danny>

BED & BREAKFAST FACILITIES IN LONDON, ENGLAND

If your travel plans call for a stop in London, you will be pleased to learn about a most gracious Adventist couple that offer the best accommodation and breakfast I have ever enjoyed. It has become my home away from home when in London. See details at: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Promotions/BED&BREAKFAST.htm>

TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER FOR ADVENTIST CHURCHES AND MEMBERS

TAGnet provides an incredible number of webhosting services to our churches and members. This newsletter comes to you through their gracious and efficient service. For detail information, visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET. They are ready and eager to help you.